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LORD ROSEBERY.

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Lord Rosebery

Imperialist

By

J. A. Hammerton

Author of "J. M. Barrie and His Books," etc., etc.

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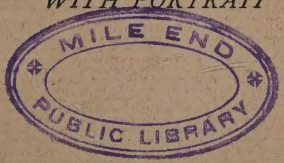

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PREFATORY NOTE

IN a series such as that of which this book forms a volume it is essential that the author should approach his subject free from bias and untrammelled by political prejudices. It is true, of course, that no man can be utterly barren of political sympathies; the present writer has certainly no intention of suggesting that his mind is a vacuum politically; but he does contend that it is possible to present a view of even a party leader which shall neither ignore his politics nor exhibit these in any but the light of fairness and reason. It may be that Lord Rosebery furnishes a subject with which it is particularly easy to deal in a non-partisan spirit, for he is certainly the least partisan of our prominent statesmen, and this despite the fact that he has stood forth steadfastly and unflinchingly for the political cause to which his family has ever been attached. Be that as it may, the author can claim at least that he has sought to sketch the Earl's career in such a way that the result might be acceptable to readers of all shades of political opinion.

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Lord Rosebery

INTRODUCTORY.

WHATEVER the colour of our political convictions may be, we must confess that there is no more interesting figure in English public life to-day than that of the Earl of Rosebery. He is the man of mystery, the man with a future, the man with a brilliant past.

A well-known London Editor has said that if he were to judge public opinion by the letters which he receives from day to day, the question which most interests the British public is the future of this distinguished statesman, who has already been Premier of England and is still a comparatively young man.

The character of Lord Rosebery is indeed a most attractive one. In his career it has been his good fortune, and sometimes his misfortune, to touch the life of the country in so many different ways that there is scarcely any important section of the community which does not feel some immediate interest in him.

It has been given to few men to fill so unique a position as he occupies in public life to-day. At the age of fifty-four we find him a political free-lance, confessing, it is true, the Liberal faith, but recognising no ties of party, with a large following prepared to go whither he may lead, and, it is believed, with a very considerable opposition within the ranks of that political party to whose principles he has ever been attached. We find him so to-day, his future, so to say, close-curtained from our view; but be that future what it may, there stands to his credit a record of public work and service to his country which many a statesman would have been proud to have achieved in his seventieth year. These are the circumstances that give to the name of Rosebery the interest which everyone seems to find in it.

The Earl has been a leader in the nineteenth century, and, unless the fates be curiously unkind to him, of all his contemporaries he is the likeliest to stand forth as a leader, and a great leader, in the new century. On the strength of his past achievements we know that his future possesses tremendous possibilities.

To the close student of Lord Rosebery's life and work it is apparent that he has often been strongly influenced at critical times by the circumstances in which he has found himself, and sometimes, indeed, it may be thought that he would have proved himself

a greater leader by rising superior to these circumstances, instead of allowing them to affect him. On the other hand, the influence thus exerted by the time upon the man has often been to the good of the latter. At the present moment we have an example of conditions which must vitally affect the whole course of his future career and the future of Liberalism.

The dominant note of Lord Rosebery's life has been Imperialism. In season and out of season he has advocated that faith to which the British nation at the present moment may be said to have subscribed almost with one voice. At one time, as the apostle of Imperial Federation—a movement which no longer exists as a concrete organisation but the aims of which have recently been in considerable degree achieved—he has for many years urged persistently and persuasively upon the public the drawing together of our Colonies in a closer bond of Union. It has been his good fortune to see much that he advocated come to pass, and having thus intimately identified himself with Imperialism, and the knitting together of our great Colonial possessions, it cannot be doubted that in an age which is likely to see the zenith of the British Empire there still remains a high place and a worthy work for this Liberal Imperialist. Unlike his admired Pitt, he is living in a great epoch, and therein has he the advantage of his Mentor. Time and again he has urged that the

foreign policy of Great Britain must be a Colonial policy, and to-day the truth of this is, perhaps, too obvious to require especial emphasis.

Although Lord Rosebery has never tired of avowing his Liberal principles, which, like many of his other qualities, are hereditary—for he comes of a long line of liberal Peers—it is difficult to think of him as a mere party politician. This may be one of the secrets of his universal popularity. He has always taken his stand for a non-partisan foreign policy, and though as earnest perhaps as any member of the Liberal party in advancing those reforms which he and they consider desirable for the well-being of the British Isles, he has always played the game of politics with such good humour that he has avoided stirring up those bitter waters of party hate which some politicians delight to splash in.

While it has been his good fortune to live, and work, and achieve distinction in the most brilliant era of British history, it has also been his fate to be identified with the Liberal party in the zenith and the nadir of its greatness. Whether it will be given to him to raise a new Liberalism, phœnix-like from the ashes of the old, no one can tell and time alone will show.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROMISE OF YOUTH.

UNLIKE the great Sir Robert Peel, it cannot be said that Lord Rosebery was dedicated to politics from his cradle, unless we take it that the mere fact of his being born the heir to a peerage destined him to a political life. But it is one of the curious feature of his youth that many people who knew him were prone to prophesy that the young Lord Dalmeny would one day achieve a great position in the counsels of the nation. And it is recorded that, when only fourteen years of age, he made a boyish speech in reply to the toast of his health at a banquet given by his grandfather, the fourth Earl, to the Linlithgow Volunteers at Dalmeny Park, and the manner in which he acquitted himself on that occasion induced a neighbour of his grandfather's—Mr James Dundas of Dundas—to prophesy that in the young Dalmeny they beheld a future Premier of England.

The founder of the Earl's family derived his name from the lands of Primrose, in the County of Fife, and in the reign of Queen Mary this Duncan Primrose

lived at Culross, in Perthshire, having two sons, the elder of whom, Gilbert, became principal surgeon to James I. and to Queen Anne. In 1615 the death of Gilbert Primrose is recorded. He left a son of the same name, who died in 1642, a canon of Windsor, having been celebrated for "learning and piety." The life of the latter had not been passed entirely in this country, for he had achieved a distinguished position as a minister of the Reformed Church in France, and thus, like others of his descendants, had managed in the course of his lifetime to live two careers. He was something of a *litterateur* as well as a preacher, and his literary qualities seem to have been hereditary in his descendants. His son David followed in the father's footsteps, and after his course at Oxford became a minister of the French Protestant Church at Rouen. He is remembered for a notable book in defence of "the Sabbath and the Lord's Day" written in French and translated into English by his father, whose reputation for piety was well maintained in the son.

The second son of Duncan Primrose of Culross bore the name of Archibald, and his younger son James became an eminent lawyer, being appointed by James I. in 1602 Clerk of Privy Council, which position he held for forty years. James was married twice, and was succeeded by the eldest son of his second marriage, Archibald, who received the honour

of a Baronetcy, and subsequently held a life peerage as Lord Carington. Sir Archibald Primrose's life covered the years from 1616 to 1679, and included the stormy period of the Civil Wars, during which he remained loyal to the King. He succeeded his father as Clerk of Privy Council in 1642, and though deprived of the office from 1649 to 1651, continued therein for ten years after the latter date, until created a Lord of Session and of the Exchequer, and a member of the Privy Council. He also held the office of Lord Clerk Register, but in 1678, owing, it is said, to a court intrigue, he was removed from this position, and appointed Justice-General. Even this office was taken from him through the plotting of political opponents during the same year, and on 27th November 1679 he died. He was buried in the church of Dalmeny, on the beautiful estate which he had purchased from the Earl of Haddington in 1662, and which has ever since remained the chief seat of the Primrose family.

Like so many of the family, Lord Carington had married twice. His eldest son by the first marriage, William, succeeded to the Baronetcy, and his youngest, Gilbert, rose to the rank of Major-General after serving under Marlborough on the Rhine and in the Low Countries. His only son by his second wife was born in 1661, and lived till 1723. He was the Archibald who became the first Earl of Rosebery.

He served with the Imperial Army in Hungary, and being opposed to the policy of James II. in Scotland, he had to answer before the Privy Council in 1688 to the charge of "leasing, making and sowing discord among the officers of State," but, thanks to the good offices of the Duke of Berwick, no evil befel him. After the Revolution we find him included among the gentlemen of the Bed Chamber to Prince George of Denmark.

The political fortunes of the family really commenced with him, for in 1695 he was chosen to represent the County of Edinburgh in the Scottish Parliament, and for his valuable support to the Government he was created Viscount Rosebery, Lord Primrose of Dalmeny, on 1st April 1700. Three years later his honours were increased, and he became Earl of Rosebery, Viscount of Inverkeithing, and Lord Dalmeny and Primrose in the Scottish Peerage. Like his descendant of to-day, he lived in a momentous epoch in the fortunes of Great Britain, being one of the Commissioners for the Union with England, and sitting in the House of Lords as a Scottish representative Peer from 1707 to 1713. His wife was Dorothea, heiress of Everingham Cressy of Birkin, Yorkshire, by whom he had six sons and six daughters. He died in 1723, and a year later the sale of his library by public auction in Edinburgh disclosed the wide range of his literary tastes. It is

not known why this sale should have taken place, and we may suppose it has always been a source of regret to the present Earl that so valuable a collection of books should have passed out of the family possession. The eldest son of the first Earl was James, who in 1741 succeeded to the family estate and Baronetcy of the elder branch of the Primrose family, on the death of his kinsman Hugh, Viscount Primrose.

The second Earl of Rosebery, who thus became the sixth Baronet—for the elder branch of the Primrose family had been a short-lived race—married Mary, sister of the fourth Duke of Argyll, and had two sons: John, Lord Dalmeny, who died 11th August 1755; Neil, who became third Earl; and one daughter, Dorothea, who married Sir Adam Inglis, Bart. The third Earl had been born in 1728, and succeeded his father on the 8th May 1756, marrying, eight years later, Susan, the sister and heir of Sir Randal Ward, Bart., and secondly, in 1775, Mary, daughter of Sir Francis Vincent, Bart.

The fourth Earl, and grandfather of the present Lord Rosebery, was born at Dalmeny Castle on 14th October 1783, his mother being the second wife of the third Earl. Educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he graduated M.A. in 1804, he represented the borough of Helston in 1805–6 and Cashel in 1806–7. His father dying in 1814, he suc-

ceeded to the Peerage, and for several Parliaments sat in the House of Lords as a Scottish representative Peer, but on 17th January 1828 he was created a Peer of the United Kingdom, under the title of Baron Rosebery of Rosebery, Midlothian, and so received the right of sitting in the House without election. It is under this title, of course, that the present Earl sits in Parliament.

The fourth Earl, although he never achieved any distinction as a statesman, was an earnest Liberal, and as such took an active share in the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. In the previous year he had been admitted to the Privy Council, and he was made a Knight of the Order of the Thistle in 1846, while from 1843 to 1863 he held the office of Lord-Lieutenant of Linlithgowshire. His tastes were more inclined towards literature and learning than to the pursuit of politics. He was a fellow of the Royal Society and other institutions, and received in 1849 the honorary degree of D.C.L. from the University of Cambridge. This Earl was also twice married; in the first place to a daughter of the Hon. Bartholomew Bouverie, who afterwards became Earl of Radnor, and in the second instance to the elder daughter of the first Viscount Anson, subsequently Earl of Lichfield.

There were two sons and a daughter by the first marriage, and two sons by the second. The eldest son of the first marriage was born in 1809, and bore

the favourite family name of Archibald, taking, of course, the courtesy title, Lord Dalmeny. The career of this Lord Dalmeny is of particular interest to us, as he became the father of the present Lord Rosebery.

We find in Lord Dalmeny many of the most marked characteristics which the life of his more distinguished son presents. A man of strongly marked individuality, he displayed, perhaps in greater degree than any of his ancestors, that spirit of Liberalism with which the name of his family has always been associated. Unlike the present Earl he had no cause to regret a fate which set him amongst the hereditary legislators of his country, as he did not live to succeed to the peerage, and so had the advantage, if advantage it really was, of becoming a member of the popularly elected assembly. He sat in the Commons as representative of the Stirling Burghs from 1832 to 1847, during which period he experienced several stiff contests for the retention of his seat. He had thus an opportunity of displaying any remarkable gifts of statesmanship which he might have possessed, but we must conclude that these were not present, as his most important office was that of a Lord of the Admiralty, which he held from 1835 till the fall of the Melbourne Ministry.

More interesting to us, perhaps, than his Parliamentary career is the knowledge that he was a

devoted student of literature, and not merely a reader and lover of books, but one who, if he had cared, might have achieved some distinction as an author. *An Address to the Middle Classes upon the Subject of Gymnastic Exercises* was the title of a vigorous pamphlet issued from his pen in 1848, and in this we discover his sincere interest in the welfare of the classes who at that time were understood to be the backbone of Liberalism; also his love of all forms of healthy sport. His sympathy with social reform, to which in later years his son was to render such signal service, is disclosed in various passages which occur in this curious pamphlet. "We are the wisest, the greatest, but the saddest nation in the world," he avers, and, speaking of what Parliament can do to brighten the lives of the people, he goes on to say: "Legislation can do much, but it cannot do all; it cannot protect a man against that state of debility and disease which is the inevitable consequence of his own luxury and sloth; if it supplies him with a pure atmosphere it cannot force him to practise the temperance and adopt those habits of exercise which are indispensable to health. . . . In fact, health cannot be secured and guaranteed by Act of Parliament. Such are the habits of our middle classes, that they would be far from possessing it if they enjoyed the air of the Grampians. It is not so much additional air as additional exercise that they

require." In another passage he declares: "The free citizens of England are the voluntary slaves of toil, which is never—as in the case of those who are the property of others—diversified by amusement. We are indeed rich in literary and scientific societies, mechanic reading-clubs, schools of philosophy and art; rich in institutions for bewildering and oppressing the overwrought brains of our middle and operative classes with crude speculations and ill-digested knowledge. But where are the institutions for gymnastics? Where are the associations for physical exercises? Where are the arenas where the limbs, the sinews, the spirits of our merchants may be recreated and refreshed by manly diversions? Where are the noble sports of our ancestors? Where are the rude but invigorating pastimes which hardened their muscles, steeled their nerves, expanded their frames, exhilarated their spirits, and gladdened their hearts?"

One biographer of Lord Rosebery has managed to discern in this passage a frame of mind which would have made the late Lord Dalmeny proud indeed to have seen his son the possessor of a Derby winner; but for my poor part I see no word here which would justify such a conclusion. There is nothing in the passage quoted but a noble and praiseworthy desire to help the middle and working classes of the community to a better

appreciation of the manifold blessings of good health.

The late Lord Dalmeny, although he lived on the eve and not within the era of British Colonial expansion, would no doubt have been as warm and whole-hearted an Imperialist as his son, and his view of England's mission was that of a true patriot. He says, for instance: "It is this blending of business and domestic habits that has made England what she is—the mart and model of the world, the emporium of all trade, the asylum of freedom and order, the shrine of public and private virtue."

At this point, although anticipating the chronology of our story, it is desirable to notice how Lord Rosebery's opinions on these questions fit in with those of his father. Speaking on the subject of sport at the opening of a Free Library at Shepherd's Bush in 1896, his Lordship referred to the great interest which is shown to-day in outdoor sports, and while describing it as a healthy and rational tendency, was careful to point out that it might be carried too far. He confessed that he had never seen one of the great football matches of the North or the Midlands, which he had been led to believe were "almost Homeric in their character, in their strenuousness, and the excitement they engendered." But he intended to see one very soon, because he thought "we have lived in vain

if we have not seen one." This, of course, we may set down to the mere pleasantry of the platform, for if indeed his Lordship does believe this, then it is to be feared he is carrying his father's principles too far. The great football matches to which he refers are not in any sense healthy sports. Time was when they could be so described, but now they are little better than the Turf in the associations which have grown around them and obliterated nearly all that was originally good in them. Lord Rosebery, in the speech referred to, remarked: "We have to maintain a great Empire; we have to develop a great Empire, and for Imperial purposes you need a race of muscle, of strength, and of nerve. All these are developed by these sports." To which one might reply, that if the British Empire has ever to depend upon the shouting multitudes who watch twenty-two hired football-kickers at play of a Saturday afternoon, then alas! for the Empire.

The late Lord Dalmeny had married in 1843 Catherine Lucy Wilhelmina, only daughter of Philip Henry, fourth Earl of Stanhope, a lady of great beauty and many accomplishments, who was a personal friend of the young Queen Victoria, and was one of the eight maidens of noble birth who bore the train of her late Majesty at her coronation and also on the occasion of her marriage.

Lady Wilhelmina from her earliest years gave

evidence of remarkable artistic and literary gifts, proofs of which are preserved in her beautifully-illustrated story, *The Spanish Ladye's Love.*

Lord Dalmeny died somewhat suddenly in January 1851, leaving his young widow with four children—Lady Mary Constance, who became Mrs Henry Walter Hope; Lady Constance Evelyn, who married the late Lord Leconfield; Colonel Everard Henry Primrose, who joined the Guards, and died at Abu Fatmeh, in Egypt, on 9th April 1885; the present peer, Archibald Philip Primrose, being the third child and elder son. The young Lord Dalmeny was less than four years old at his father's death.

Reference has been made to the influence of events and outward circumstances on the development of Lord Rosebery's character, and a curious fact has been noticed by his different biographers, and will possibly claim the attention of future writers who review the Earl's career. On the morning of his birth a remarkable leading article appeared in the *Times*, discussing the social conditions of the working classes. The writer urged the imperative need of reform in this direction, and quoted incidentally some passages from a speech by Lord Ethrington at Plymouth in 1845, wherein his Lordship had said, describing some of the conditions which he had observed in working-class houses quite near to Regent Street: "I have found many of them full of

steam from clothes hung up to dry across the room. In one there lay a child, dead five days. We did not see one healthy face, either of adult or child. Many children were ill: some had measles, some with fever, many with scrofula which had covered them with wounds. In every family we heard of sickness and death; some had lost two-thirds, hardly any less than one-half, their children . . . . And yet here were living the most respectable of the labouring classes—porters, policemen, and such like . . . . paying for their one miserable room as much as Mr Ashworth, of Egerton, a manufacturer such as this country may well be proud of, receives from his prosperous workpeople for cottages which I saw containing five and six and seven rooms each, with every convenience."

It was a curious coincidence that such an article as this should have appeared in the leading journal of the country, a trumpet call, as it were, to social reform, on the very day which saw the birth of one who, apart from all the honours he has earned and all the distinction he has received or may yet attain, might well be proud to rest his reputation on his efforts for promoting the welfare of the working classes of this country.

The home of Lord Dalmeny was at No. 20 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, and here, on Friday, 7th May 1847, was born the subject of our sketch. Prior

to Lord Dalmeny's marriage, the house had been occupied by Earl Stanhope, Lady Dalmeny's father, and for some time the two families resided there, but as his daughter's family increased Lord Stanhope removed, and the house was tenanted by his son-in-law up to his death in 1851; so that here the childhood of the present Earl was passed.

After the death of her husband, Lady Dalmeny devoted herself to the training of her children, and happy were they in possessing a mother whose tastes were so refined, whose gifts so rare. Much of her time was now passed at Chevening Park, Lord Stanhope's beautiful seat near Sevenoaks, but in August 1854 her ladyship married for a second time, thus reversing the record of her husband's family. She now became the wife of Sir Harry Vane, afterwards Duke of Cleveland, and as the Duchess of Cleveland she retains to-day much of that beauty which made her one of the most admired ladies of the early Victorian days. Her literary tastes have deepened with years, and her artistic gifts have never been allowed to remain idle.

The first schoolmaster to be honoured with so promising a pupil as the young Dalmeny was the late Mr W. R. Lee, of 8 Norfolk Terrace, Brighton, a man of great learning and character, who set himself to foster a love of literature in a pupil who even at the early age of ten was displaying a distinct taste for

books. At this time Dalmeny was a frequent visitor at his grandfather's, the aged Earl delighting to have the bright young heir near him, and it was while staying at Dalmeny Park that the schoolboy speech, to which reference has already been made, was delivered.

In 1862 his Lordship entered Eton College, where, curiously enough, it was his luck to become "fag" to a gentleman with whom he was to be very closely associated in political life many years later—that gentleman being the Right Hon. A. H. D. Acland, M.P. His career at Eton was by no means remarkable, but everybody with whom he came in contact warmed to him by reason of his many graces of character. Here again we have to notice the influence of his surroundings, for it can scarcely be doubted that the deep interest in horse-racing taken by the scholars at Eton must have had something to do with the development of his love for the so-called "sport of kings." The school *Chronicle*, which could only record the discussions of the Debating Society in three-line paragraphs, thought two columns little enough for chatter about horse-racing. It would be wrong, however, to suppose that this represented the proportion which sport and study occupied in the mind of Dalmeny, since there is ample evidence to prove that, although he entered with zest into all the sports of the school, he was a sedulous and promising student.

The master whose good fortune it was to foster his intellectual tastes at this the most formative period of the mind was Mr William Johnson, who subsequently assumed the name of Cory, and whose privately printed *Letters and Journals of William Cory* contain much that is of deep interest to students of Lord Rosebery's career. From these we learn that Dalmeny's bent was distinctly towards literature, Mr Cory referring to him in one case as "a budding bibliomaniac." "I took him last week to Lilly's," he writes, "and he forthwith inquired for rare tracts printed by his ancestor Primrose. We went on to Evans's, and there he picked out a print representing another Primrose of the seventeenth century, preacher to the French Church in London. At Holloway's he bought autographs, and thoughtfully went and made acquaintance with my brother and sister, and showed as much interest in a live child as in dead books. . . . . The night before I had translated to him most of the beautiful bits of Agamemnon, and I assure you he enjoyed the old poetry nearly as much as the modern. I am doing all I can to make him a scholar; anyhow, he will be an orator, and if not a poet, such a man as poets delight in." We have here a real clue to the inner character of Lord Rosebery. The versatility of the man is seen in Mr Cory's statement that he showed "as much interest in a live child as in dead books."

Already he had come under the spell of the two Pitts, for we find Mr Cory, at another time, writing to him: "I have been qualifying for an interview with *you* by reading *The Family Life of Pitt*," from which it is apparent that his Lordship's knowledge of this great statesman, many of whose qualities, mingled with some of those which distinguished the elder Pitt, he combines in himself. He appears also to have been interested in the works of the Brontës, and it will be seen from this passage in one of Mr Cory's letters, describing a Continental tour made in company with his distinguished pupil, that Lord Rosebery's interest in Napoleon is no development of recent years: "Dalmeny is a strong but wise admirer of both Napoleons; altogether he must be the wisest boy that ever lived—and full of fun, too."

Mr Cory, as we have already seen, hinted that Dalmeny was something of a poetaster, and it is well known that his Lordship has often exercised in private his gift of verse. Indeed it is probable that he might even have achieved distinction as a worshipper of the tuneful Nine, for his master writes thus in his journal of those days at Eton: "I looked over Dalmeny's verses; to alter them was a long, delicate job, as they were not commonplace *pro formâ* things, but an honest attempt at turning, of his own accord, some rhymes of mine, which he

had read in manuscript, of the French lady who on her deathbed made her page play on a lute 'La Défaite des Suisses' till he came to 'Tout est perdu,' then made him go over it again, and died murmuring those last sad words."

It is curious to note, by the way, that while at Eton Lord Dalmeny opened a discussion on, "Was Sir Harry Vane's an estimable character?" The Sir Harry referred to was, of course, the famous statesman who was beheaded on Tower Hill in June 1662, and not his more fortunate descendant who married Lord Rosebery's mother and was elevated to the Peerage. Lord Dalmeny argued in Sir Harry's favour, but the voting was against him, as the school *Chronicle* tersely reports: "Noes, 16; Ayes, 3—Majority against, 13."

His Eton days over, Dalmeny next went to Christ College, Oxford, where he matriculated in January 1866. Here his abilities were readily recognised, and in addition to the resources of this famous college he had the advantage of much foreign travel in developing and ripening his mind. But his Lordship was no phenomenal student in the way of prize-taking, and one of the most noteworthy features of his college days was the fatality with which his sportive inclinations asserted themselves, nor, as in later years, always to his advantage. Christ College was as great a centre

of sport as Eton had been, and, with some of the students at least, horse-racing occupied much more thought than profitable study.

Dalmeny speedily endeared himself to a wide circle of his fellow-students, with whom his popularity was unbounded, although, by this time, he had formulated well-grounded political opinions, avowing himself an ardent Radical. Not merely content with an outside interest in horse-racing, he had already determined to win "the blue riband of the turf" and kept a stud. His horses were occasionally successful in steeplechases, and thus led to differences with the university authorities, the Dean very rightly disapproving of the practice.

All through life his Lordship has given evidence of a strong spirit of independence, and when this collision with the Dean arose, believing himself to be in the right, he refused to submit to authority, and so quitted Oxford on this wretched question of horse-racing, without having taken a degree. It is doubtful if the Dean saw in the outgoing student a future Premier of England.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY DAYS IN PARLIAMENT.

THE year which followed Dalmeny's departure from Oxford was to be an important one for him. On 4th March 1868 the fourth Earl died at his London house in Piccadilly, having reached the venerable age of eighty-five. He was buried at Dalmeny, and Lord Dalmeny, who did not come of age till the following May, was soon showing his genuine interest in the welfare of the people on the various estates which were about to pass into his possession. "His heart was with the people always," says one of his biographers, "and now he determined to make the acquaintance of the tenants upon whom he called, and, in fact, at some of the houses—some of the smaller houses, too—he was a frequent and always welcome guest. Wherever he went the young Earl made friends; it is certain, one must think, who has met his Lordship at all frequently, that he could never have made enemies except in the political world, where the clever man, especially if he succeeds soon, is sure to find them."

The young Earl took his seat in the House of Lords on the 22nd May 1868, and entered in real earnest upon a course of preparation for the political career which had now opened out to him. He travelled a great deal on the Continent and in America, his first long tour in Europe being made in company with the late Marquis of Bute, and everywhere he went he was not merely on pleasure bent, but was going about with observant eyes and enquiring mind, studying the conditions of life in the great towns of the old world and the new and in our dominion of Canada, laying, in a word, a very solid foundation for that useful and distinguished career he had now determined to build up. And here it is worth while to quote a passage from his famous address to the Social Science Congress, delivered six years later, in which he touches upon the need of training for our hereditary legislators: "We have no hereditary surgeons, or priests, or soldiers, or lawyers," he said. "We have, however, a large body of hereditary legislators. We have a considerable number of men who are hereditary legislators during good behaviour, for they, and their fathers before them, have sat in Parliament so long as they were solvent and respectable. But for these technical education is not provided or even contemplated. We agree that an artisan cannot do his work properly without special instruction; but for those to whom we entrust our fates, our fortunes,

and our honour, no such training is requisite. It is expected and assumed that a Peer shall take to politics as a duck takes to swimming. Nor have we improved on our fathers. Macaulay tells us that it was considered wonderful that the elder Pitt had never read *Vattel*, but can we feel any certainty that every member has read the *Wealth of Nations*?"

From this we can gather how seriously the young Earl viewed the responsibilities to which he had succeeded, and it is doubtful if many members of the popular assembly have ever been at such pains to fortify themselves with the knowledge necessary to the work of true legislation as Lord Rosebery went to, in order to qualify himself for a career in a chamber to which, as he truly says, young Peers are supposed to succeed with all the equipment of the legislator inherited from their ancestors. If every nobleman who is born to a seat in the Upper House prepared himself as conscientiously for the work thereof as did the young Earl, perhaps we should hear less said against the principle of a Second Chamber than we do.

For his first three years in the House of Lords the Earl was a silent member, a listener rather than a talker, a watcher of events; and it was not until the opening of Parliament in February 1871 that his Lordship's voice was heard in the House. The occasion was one of much moment, for Victoria opened Parliament in person, and the Queen's Speech

was one of the longest documents of the kind ever laid before the Lords and Commons. The Franco-German War, which was then exercising the mind of Europe, occupied a large portion of the Speech; the British North American Fisheries, the establishment of the House of Savoy in Spain, the disturbances in Greece, the massacre at Tientsin, and other questions were referred to, while home legislation also received considerable attention, and the marriage of Princess Louise to the Marquis of Lorne received the Royal assent.

It was well known that Mr Gladstone had been early impressed with the abilities of the young Liberal Peer, and had no doubt marked him out for distinction. He was, therefore, chosen to second the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech, the Marquis of Westminster being the mover. How well he acquitted himself may be gathered from the following comments passed by the *Times*, which, after complimenting Lord Westminster, went on to say: "Lord Rosebery was even more successful. He spoke with a graceful emotion which became his years, and it was evident that if he controlled himself from dilating on the great events of the autumn, it was not because he was deficient in feeling, but because he was under the restraint of a discretion which had been imposed upon him." In short, his maiden speech was universally admitted to be most successful, and Mr Gladstone had reason

to congratulate himself that his opinion of the young Peer was likely to be borne out by events.

Once more there crops up in our narrative that sinister topic from which unfortunately no biographer of Lord Rosebery can hope to free himself, and which we shall have to discuss again and yet again. In 1869 his Lordship made his first effort to win the Derby with a horse named Ladas, but the attempt was crowned with failure, his Lordship's horse trotting in somewhere in the rear of all the others. Curiously enough it was an animal of the same name which many years later was to secure for its noble owner a prize which he coveted, a prize which has probably proved the most embarrassing honour he ever won.

Whatever may be our opinion of the Earl's connection with the Turf, none can avoid admiring the sturdy manner in which he has always defended his actions as an owner of racehorses. It is very obvious that his pleasure in the Turf arises largely from his love of a good horse, which he shares, as he has reminded us, with Oliver Cromwell. He has never in any shape or form countenanced by any action of his the vile system of betting, without which it is doubtful if any race-course in the country could muster one for every thousand spectators that can be secured at present. In February of 1873, when he delivered one of his earliest speeches in the House,

in proposing an address praying Her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the condition of this country with regard to horses and its capability of supplying any present or future demand for them—a proposition, by the way, that reads with curious interest to-day, when so much has been said about our lack of horses in the Boer war—in this speech he avowed that though he had no personal interest in the matter, he could not join in the fashionable denunciation of the Turf as "selfish, immoral, and as provocative of gambling." "If," said he, "in the month of September an apprentice robs his master's till, grave magistrates bewail the fact as a lamentable illustration of what is owing to the St Leger. If in the month of May an old woman is run over at a crossing, her misfortune is attributed to the Derby. Against such denunciations I would use the words of a gentleman who has certainly no prepossessions in favour of racing, and he says: 'Of itself it is a noble, manly, distinguished, historical, national amusement'; that is a description which must be accepted by noble Lords on both sides of the House as above and beyond suspicion, for it proceeds from the Prime Minister (Mr Gladstone)." Further on in the same speech he gave it as his opinion that one might as well try to abolish gambling by prohibiting races as, in the words of the French wits, to abolish rain by suppressing the gutters. All this, of

course, is the merest begging of the question, but we need not deal further with the subject at the moment, as it is bound to engage our attention farther on.

It was not only in the House of Lords that the young Earl was practising the art of oratory. We find that at the Scott celebration, held in Edinburgh in August 1871, his Lordship, then a bachelor of twenty-four, had the delicate duty of proposing the toast of "The Ladies," which he did in a very happy and successful way. It is also interesting to note that on this occasion the banquet was presided over by the Earl of Dalkeith, who in later years was to be Mr Gladstone's opponent for the representation of Midlothian, and, practically speaking, Lord Rosebery's rival, for the first Midlothian campaign was in a large measure an onslaught of the Liberal Primroses against the Conservative Buccleuchs.

A more important public appearance, and, indeed, an event of some moment in his earlier years of public life, was his Lordship's address to the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution in November of the same year, when he spoke on the subject of the "Union of England and Scotland." "Great as was that Union, a greater still remained," he said. "They had in a generation to effect that union of classes with which hitherto power was a phantom and freedom a farce. In their days the rich man and the poor gazed at each other across no impassable gulf; for neither was there

in this country an Abraham's bosom of calm beatitude. A powerless monarchy, an isolated aristocracy, an intelligent and aspiring people did not altogether form the conditions of constitutional stability. They had to restore a new pulse, a healthy beat to the heart of the Commonwealth. It was a great work—a work of individuals as well as of statesmen, alien from none of them, rather belonging to them all. Each in his place could further it." And so he pleaded for something nobler, something more enduring than a mere Union of nations. His speech gave evidence of a quite remarkable grasp of national history, deep reading, and a keen appreciation of all the events.

In many respects it was a notable performance for one of his age, and so impressed was his learned audience that the Society afterwards issued the address in pamphlet form.

His Lordship was steadily growing in public popularity, and his name was becoming a more familiar one to the readers of newspapers, by reason of his occasional speeches in the House of Lords and his appearances on the platform in the country; yet we find the *Daily News*, in its report of a debate on the subject of Life Peerages, which took place in the House in July 1873, putting in brackets after Lord Rosebery's name the words, "a very young Peer." In view of an important event which falls to be recorded in the succeeding year, we may conclude that about

this time he was achieving a remarkable access of popularity.

It was rumoured that his visit to Canada in 1873 had some connection with a secret commission from Lord Kimberley, then Colonial Secretary, as the Pacific Railway Scandals had precipitated a ministerial crisis in the Government of the Dominion, which eventually resulted in the ejection of Sir John MacDonald's Ministry. This, of course, may have been no more than mere newspaper gossip; but we may be sure his Lordship's visit was fruitful and instructive to himself. He saw all the leading statesmen and politicians of Canada, and is said to have been once more the subject of prophecy, a shrewd Dominion leader venturing the opinion: "If that young man lives, he will be Prime Minister of England."

In 1874 he presided over a distinguished company representing the drama, literature, and the arts, which assembled to do honour to the popular actor Mr J. L. Toole, then about to leave on an American tour. But the real event of this year, and in truth one of the landmarks in his Lordship's life, was his address to the Social Science Congress, over which he had been asked to preside, an exceptional distinction for a young man of twenty-seven. His speech was a magnificent one, a veritable triumph of oratory; brilliant, full of knowledge, sympathy, and

lofty ideals. Considering the vastness of his subject, the many phases of Social Science with which it dealt, it reads admirably, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph being closely knit together, and subject connected with subject in a way which demonstrated that the speaker had a thorough understanding of them all. In suggestion it was practical, in manner one could almost describe it as poetical, but as a whole it may be voted an effort which could scarcely be equalled by any one at the age of twenty-seven. It is also of peculiar value to the student of Lord Rosebery, for it lays bare the whole drift of his Lordship's mind. Reading it, we can quite understand the feeling that prompted Lord Houghton, the retiring President of the Congress, to say, in introducing the young Earl to the Assembly, that "if he uses his talents aright and uses them with industry and persistence, he will, I doubt not, add to the illustrious roll of the Scotsmen of his age." In after years the son of this Lord Houghton was to become son-in-law of the young Earl to whom he applied these words.

Although taking no very prominent part in politics during the first ten years of his Parliamentary life, Lord Rosebery was associated with events which had an important bearing on his future career, and was steadily forming a close, even a passionate friendship with Mr Gladstone, a connection which was to prove

of superlative value to his fortunes as a public man. These years were fraught with many great events in the political world, and even the briefest sketch of Lord Rosebery's life would be incomplete without some attempt to recall the spirit of the time in which the foundations of his Parliamentary reputation were being laid.

As we have learned, he took his seat in May of 1868, and in the winter of that year the great contest between Gladstone and Disraeli took place, resulting in a victory for the Liberal Party in December. This Liberal Government has been described as "the greatest peace ministry of modern times."

The young Peer had seen in the House of Lords the dying days of the Disraeli Administration, and no doubt followed with lively interest the electoral campaign in which Mr Gladstone engaged that winter. The Liberal leader was then member for South-west Lancashire, and his address to the electors of that constituency gave prominence to the Franchise question, which had been a critical issue at the election of 1866. He reminded the electors that when the Government of Earl Russell in 1866 brought in proposals for the extension of the Franchise they were met by an opposition which at length reached a point that compelled the resignation of the Ministry. Then the opponents of the reduction of the Franchise, when they assumed office,

were forced by the weight of public sentiment to proposals for the adjustment of the Franchise which eventually resulted in the passing of a larger and more democratic bill than that of 1866. From this "extensive though unequal enfranchisement" Mr Gladstone anticipated increased strength for national institutions, and went on to hope that the lately enfranchised classes would assist in securing a more thrifty administration than he considered the Disraeli Government had been. He spoke of the need of further legislation in the direction of primary education, and expressed the opinion that the state of Ireland was a question which even then overshadowed all the rest. He referred to the work of Earl Russell's Government in Ireland, and the necessity for disestablishing the Irish Church, but although he gave the Irish question an important place in his election address it cannot be said that it occupied so much attention in the campaign speeches of the party, the Reform Act being a veritable Aaron's rod, which swallowed up most of the other topics.

Mr Gladstone himself lost his seat in South-west Lancashire. This was no doubt a keen disappointment to him, as he had appeared confident of victory, though his party organisers had thought otherwise, and Greenwich readily accepted him as its representative. The general result of the election, however, was to provide the Liberal leader with an overwhelm-

ing Parliamentary majority, and Mr Disraeli resigned before the new Parliament assembled.

One of the earliest measures of the new Gladstone Administration was the fulfilment of the promise to disestablish the Church in Ireland, which was eventually accomplished by compromise. The Irish Land Bill was introduced in 1870, and passed, its main purpose being to secure fixity of tenure. In the same session no less important a measure than the Elementary Education Bill was placed on the Statute Book, and the school board system thus inaugurated. A notable feature of the agitation which raged around the passage of this Bill was the Nonconformist opposition, led by Mr Edward Miall against the various compromises which the Government accepted on several important clauses.

In the summer of 1870 the Franco-German War broke out, an epoch-making event destined to have far-reaching influence on "the balance of power" in Europe. Lord Rosebery's maiden speech was delivered in 1871, when the situation on the Continent was most critical, but happily nothing arose to complicate British relationships in any way, and the Government was devoting its attention almost exclusively to internal affairs. In 1871 it accomplished a reform of much importance by throwing open all departments of the Civil Service to competition. Several acts of minor importance were

repealed in the same year, while University tests were abolished, and the Ballot Act, securing secrecy of voting, though passed by the Commons, was rejected by the Upper House, which, however, had to accept it in the succeeding year. Purchase in the Army was abolished; earlier closing of public houses decreed by the Licensing Act of 1872. Many of these measures, though now admitted to have been in the best interests of the country, brought the Government considerable unpopularity; and in 1873 Mr Gladstone found himself unable to pass the Irish University Bill, his Government being placed in a minority of three in a division on that measure. Two days later the Ministry resigned, but on Mr Disraeli's declining to form a Government, Mr Gladstone had to resume office, and continued therein until the beginning of 1874, when Parliament was dissolved, "for the reason," said Mr Gladstone, "that the authority of the Ministry had sunk below the point necessary for the due advance and prosecution of public interest."

Going to the country on a proposal to abolish the Income Tax, Mr Gladstone only realised his mistake when the elections gave his great opponent a splendid majority. The Income Tax as an election cry had been an utter failure, for the simple reason that it in nowise affected the working-classes, and there were serious dissensions in the Nonconformist ranks

owing to the compromise on the question of primary education.

The Disraeli Administration was now secure for a long spell of power, and actually remained in office for six years and sixty-seven days, a period only exceeded by the second Government of Lord Melbourne and the second administration of Lord Palmerston, both of which enjoyed a term of office extending over six years one hundred and forty-one days.

Early in 1875 Mr Gladstone resigned the leadership of the Liberal Party, on the ground that, "at the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, he thought himself entitled to retire." Mr Gladstone at that time was deeply engaged in theological controversy, and foreseeing a long period of opposition for his party, presumably laid down the leadership with the full intention of spending the remainder of his life as a private member, devoted to the literary and religious pursuits which had always engaged his attention. He little dreamed, we may be sure, that he would again be called upon to take up the reins of leadership and of State.

All who are acquainted with the political history of our own time are well aware that during the second Disraelian Administration the Eastern Question, which has been the terror of many a subse-

quent Government, came into existence, the Russo-Turkish War in 1877 opening a problem which is not likely to be solved without shaking Europe to its centre.

By this time the subject of our sketch had very considerably increased in public esteem and influence. On all sides he was regarded as a rising politician, bound to make a mark in the future history of the country. He was now a frequent speaker in the House of Lords, evincing a strong interest in our foreign relationships, and frequently subjecting the Government to trenchant and most effective criticism.

In July 1878, when he took exception in the House to the obscurity which, he alleged, characterised the policy of the Government on the Eastern Question, Lord Salisbury, then Foreign Secretary, remarked that a statement which had fallen from the young Earl showed "the total unacquaintance he has with the inside of a Government office, and which in the noble Earl's case will, I have no doubt, not last long."

A passage such as this indicates in a flash the promising position to which Lord Rosebery had attained.

In October of the same year he delivered a noteworthy address at a Liberal demonstration in Aberdeen, criticising at considerable length the "Peace with Honour" settlement with which Lord

Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury had returned from the Berlin Congress in August. His opinion of that settlement will be gathered from this passage: "At Berlin the Powers meted out the territory of Turkey, or what portions of it were desired, to four or five Powers that asked for portions of it, but another Power was engaged behind the back of the plenipotentiaries in securing a portion for itself. That Power, gentlemen, I blush to say, was Great Britain. We rendered ourselves by that act *participes criminis*—sharers of the spoil and of the plunder of our ancient ally. We took away from ourselves the right to criticise certain Powers, who were not very particular as to how they obtained territory for themselves." This referred, of course, to our acquisition of the Island of Cyprus, and showed how his Lordship viewed that transaction. Although always insistent on our Imperial responsibilities and the needs of the British Empire, Lord Rosebery thus early displayed anxiety lest we might be tempted too far in Imperial acquisitiveness. In the same speech we find him saying: "Are you prepared to undertake the responsibility of defending the dominion of the Ottoman Empire, and to undertake the civil reform of that large country? Have we not responsibility enough as it is? We have Canada, which, I believe, has been coveted by others; we have Australia; we have a great part of Africa;

we have the whole of India. Are these not enough for this Island to undertake?"

The closing years of Lord Beaconsfield's Government were concerned with the wars in Afghanistan and Zululand. In the latter part of 1879 the public mind was looking forward to a general election, which it was felt could not be much longer delayed, and which eventually took place in the spring of 1880.

Lord Rosebery had meanwhile celebrated a most important event in his life by his marriage, on the 20th March 1878, to Miss Hannah de Rothschild, the only daughter of the late Baron and Baroness Meyer de Rothschild. The marriage was the social event of the year, and occasioned much comment. It was viewed with disfavour by the stricter members of the Hebrew sect, who have never approved of intermarriage with the Gentiles; but in this respect Miss Rothschild was only following a precedent set by other members of her own family.

The story of the Rothschilds is quite a romantic one. The founder of this great family of financiers was Mayer Amschel Rothschild, who was engaged in business as a banker and collector of curiosities in the Judengasse, Frankfort, at the beginning of last century. Much respected by Christians and those of his own religious persuasion for his honest dealing and strict integrity, he rendered a signal service

during the Napoleonic Wars to the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, who, after the passage of the Rhine by the French, had to flee from his territory, like many another of the minor German princes, and, carrying his treasures to Frankfort, placed them in the keeping of Mayer Rothschild. Soon afterwards Frankfort fell into the hands of the French, but although Rothschild's house was sacked by a party of soldiers the prince's treasures were saved, having been concealed in the garden. He did not allow this talent to lie unproductive, however. He used the hidden money to such good purpose that on the restoration of peace he was able to return all to the prince when he came back, with interest at 5 per cent. The Landgrave was so impressed with the sterling honesty of the man that he would willingly have allowed this money to have remained in Rothschild's hands as an assistance in his business. Although this offer was declined, the prince, by making known the circumstances at an important Congress in Vienna, where many rulers were together, was the means of bringing such an access of business to Mayer Rothschild that the foundation of his fabulous fortune was laid. He was subsequently created a Baron of Austria.

Another story is to the effect that, being made Court banker to the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, he was able during the Peninsular war, when Wellington

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was hampered by the failure of gold supplies, to transport large sums to Spain, the responsibility of which no English banker would incur. By these transactions he netted vast sums of money, it being said that one venture alone brought him a profit of £150,000 a year. He steadily increased in wealth and fame, and at his death in 1812 must have been inestimably rich, leaving his wife and each of his five sons the possessors of enormous fortunes. His widow, who died in 1849 at the age of ninety-six, lived a very plain and simple life, extending over a period of years to which no other member of the family has ever approached, for they are a strangely short-lived race.

Four of Mayer's sons extended the operations of the great banking house to London, Paris, Vienna, and Naples, each settling in one of these towns. Nathan, who came to London, is said to have been the ablest of the family, and was soon the leading financier in the British capital. In 1806 he married a daughter of Levi Barnet Cohen, another wealthy London Jew. There were four sons and three daughters of the marriage, and on the death of Nathan each was endowed with an ample fortune.

The second son, Mayer (who subsequently altered the spelling of his name by substituting an *e* for the *a*), had in every respect the tastes of a typical English gentleman, and took no active interest in the work of

the Rothschild bank, whose affairs were left to the care of his brother, Baron Lionel, father of the present Lord Rothschild. Dying in February 1874, he was only outlived by his wife three years, and in 1877, Hannah, his only child, who had been born in 1851, became sole possessor of his great wealth and mistress of that beautiful home, Mentmore, Leighton Buzzard. This was the gracious lady who, in 1878, became Countess of Rosebery, and soon established herself, by virtue of her charming personality and her deep interest in the welfare of the working-classes, as great a favourite with Lord Rosebery's tenants as he was himself, and as great a favourite in Society as he had become.

Once again we have to record another of those prophetic utterances to which Lord Rosebery's early career gave rise. At the Dalmeny banquet in honour of his wedding, one of the speakers, in proposing "the memories of the late Lord Rosebery, and the late Lord Dalmeny," ventured to assert that the day would yet come when Lord Beaconsfield would have to make way for Lord Rosebery as Prime Minister.

CHAPTER III.

"THE UNCROWNED KING OF SCOTLAND."

LORD ROSEBERY has always been proud of being called a Scotsman, and proud also of what Scotsmen have done to extend the dominion and fame of the British Empire. On various occasions he has shown himself a well-read student of Scottish history, keenly alive to the importance of every notable event in the annals of the country, and thoroughly appreciative of the national character.

One of the earliest public honours given to him in the North was his election in the winter of 1878 to the Lord Rectorship of Aberdeen University. The contest was an exciting one, and the finish very close, for it was by a majority of three that he was chosen by the students over Mr Richard Cross, now Lord Cross. He did not deliver his rectorial address, however, until 5th November 1880, and the day after that he was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University by a majority of thirty-nine votes over Sir Robert Christison. Both elections may be taken as proof of his rapidly growing popularity north of the Tweed at this time, as it is somewhat unusual for the

students to give their suffrages to so young a man, and, moreover, to prefer him to one honoured in years and learning. Thus his Lordship early in his career disproved—or, it may be, furnished the exception which proves the rule—that well-worn proverb about a prophet having no honour in his own country.

Lord Rosebery's popularity in Scotland has not been affected perceptibly by the ups and downs of the political party with which his name is identified, and to-day it is, perhaps, as strong as ever. In 1899 he was chosen Lord Rector of Glasgow University; so that the ancient university of St Andrews is the only one in Scotland which has not thus honoured him.

It is curious to note that when the Earl delivered his rectorial address in Edinburgh he spoke on "Patriotism," the same subject on which seventeen years later Mr Joseph Chamberlain chose to address the Glasgow students when he returned his thanks for his election as Lord Rector of their university. The patriotic note, which has always been a strong one in his Lordship's speeches, was also sounded in his Aberdeen address, but there applied more particularly to the love of the students' own country —Scotland. "If we were not natives of Scotland," said he, "we should still be hardly justified in neglecting its history. It is, in the first place, rich in bold personalities; and, in the second place, it has certain special features which must attract the

historical student, however versed he may be in the annals of other countries. . . . Take, for example, this peculiarity, that Scotland, while she had a history, developed a striking characteristic but no material prosperity; but from the moment she ceased to have a history she developed a material prosperity so marvellous as to completely obliterate her national character. . . . Nor is this difficult of explanation. The very policy of Scotland required for the defence of the Kingdom that its most fertile portion should be a desert incapable of yielding food to the invader. We hear much of the heroism of the Russians in Moscow. What, then, are we to say of the Scots? Why, for two centuries Scotland furnished a succession of burning Moscows. What is now the garden of Scotland—nay, I might add, the garden of the United Kingdom—was given up to devastation in order that the race might preserve its liberties and assert its independence. There is no nobler fact in any history. It was as if Italy had made Lombardy a desert in order to starve out the incursions of the northern nations. It was the sole chance that existed for the preservation of that freedom which was dearer to Scotland than all the wealth that the world could offer."

He then went on to speak of Scotland settling down to enjoy the Civil and Ecclesiastical freedom which the country had hoped to secure on the

removal of its Sovereign to London. "More than thirty years did indeed pass without serious disturbance; but at the first whisper of oppression, at the first raising of the mailed hand, at the first revelation of a plot against the security of what they had bled to secure, they did not weigh for a moment the quiet and well-being they had earned against the sanctity of that Kirk, which was the breath of their nostrils, and when the King drew the sword they, without hesitation, drew the sword also. . . . Scotland took the initiative and indicated the remedy to England. She began the great contest between the people and the Crown which changed the conditions of monarchy and deprived the King of his life. She, with her poverty-stricken half million, showed the path to a wealthy population ten times as numerous." These few echoes from a notable speech will sufficiently indicate the reverence his Lordship holds for the history of Scotland, and suggest, also, why it is that his countrymen look upon him as the mouthpiece of their national sentiment, the leader who is best able to voice their aspirations as one of the most loyal races grouped together under the British flag.

Touching the subject of the larger Patriotism, with which his Edinburgh address was concerned, we cannot pass from that without selecting a splendid and characteristic passage, in which the

speaker said: "In the first place allow me to remark that there is no word so prostituted as Patriotism. It is part of the base coinage of controversy. Every Government fails in it and every Opposition glows with it. It dictates silence and speech, action and inaction, interference and abstention. With unvarying force and facility it smiles impartially on the acceptance and resignation of office. It impels people to enter and quit public life with equal reason and equal precipitation. It urges to heroism, to self-sacrifice, to assassination, and to incendiarism. It rebuilt Jerusalem and burned Moscow. It stabbed Marat and put his bones in the Pantheon. It was the watchword of the reign of terror and the motto of the guillotine. It raises statues to the people whom it lodges in dungeons. It patronises almost every crime and every virtue in history. The freaks to which this unhappy word is subject, the company and costume in which it finds itself; the crime, volubility, and virtue which it inspires, deserve a separate history."

Lord Rosebery finds himself an advocate of Home Rule because he is an Imperialist, a fact which lends some piquancy to the passage just quoted, since Home Rule is as heartily opposed by others on the same grounds. In this connection it should be observed that in the speech under notice he also said: "A great Empire like the British should be a sheet knit

at the four corners, containing all manner of men, fitted for the several climes and work and spheres of action, but honouring the common vessel which contains them; not like that massive glacier-mill, the Roman State, which rounded off the resisting bodies within it to a monotonous form, while it crushed and annihilated the weaker." Again: "Was Hungary ever a source of strength to Austria till she was recognised as Hungary, and treated as Hungary, and not as an Austrian province? Take the case of Poland. Russia has attempted the suppression of Poland in that part of Poland which belongs to her; Austria has recognised and respected the nationality of Poland in her part. What is the result? Poland, in spite of Russia, is as Polish as ever; but in Austria she is loyal and in Russia she is not."

Nor can we turn from this memorable speech without a final quotation, in which he marks out very clearly, and on lines that are acceptable to those of all political creeds, the true foundations of Patriotism: "I see nothing political [in it]. . . . I see a work in which all might co-operate; an edifice where all might build or help the builders. Let the Scottish ploughman make it clear that he is better than the ploughman of other countries; the Scottish milkmaid prove that she is a better milkmaid; the Scottish housewife neater than other housewives; the labour of the day-labourer more valuable than

that of other day-labourers; the fisherman and the mechanic more expert than other fishermen and mechanics; and all these will be engaged in a work which will raise their country and will find an immediate reward."

Lord Rosebery's popularity in Scotland, apart altogether from politics, had grown to such a degree that at the time of Mr Gladstone's campaign, he was frequently referred to as the most popular man in Scotland, and was soon to be described in the Press as the "uncrowned King of Scotland." He had set his heart on winning the County of Midlothian for Liberalism, and it was largely due to his influence and suggestion that Mr Gladstone determined to make a great effort there in 1880. From time out of memory Midlothian had been dominated by the Buccleuch family, and thus gave its vote and support to the Conservative interest, so that the memorable campaign —epoch-making it might be called—from which Mr Gladstone returned to the leadership of his party and the administration of Great Britain, was also a contest between the Buccleuchs and the Primroses, from which the latter, of course, emerged triumphant.

It was in the middle of November 1879 that Mr Gladstone commenced his campaign, and the scenes occasioned by that surprising undertaking will never be erased from the minds of those who lived at the time and saw anything of the wonderful demonstra-

tions which attended the journey of the aged statesman, then in his seventieth year, to the North. At the end of the previous month Lord and Lady Rosebery had proceeded to Dalmeny in order to make ready for the reception of Mr and Mrs Gladstone, who were to be their guests on this, as on several equally notable after occasions.

The Earl spoke at many preparatory meetings in different parts of the constituency, vigorously attacking the Government of the day, and using his gifts of oratory to such purpose that when Mr Gladstone arrived the heather was already on fire and the people of the countryside clamorous to range themselves beneath the banner of the veteran and his young lieutenant.

The arrival of Mr and Mrs Gladstone at Waverley Station and their reception by Lord Rosebery, who was waiting to drive them to Dalmeny Park, was an extraordinary scene, evidence at once of the high pitch to which the popularity of the great Liberal statesman and of his distinguished young host had attained. Lord and Lady Rosebery exerted themselves to the utmost of their powers in their attendance upon their visitors, and his Lordship accompanied Mr Gladstone to all the meetings which he addressed, showing in every way his veneration for his political chief.

The remarkable enthusiasm which attended the first campaign was exceeded, if that were possible, in

the spring of the next year, when Mr Gladstone again returned to the scene of his recent triumphs, amid the added excitement of a general election. This second campaign commenced on 16th March 1880, and Lord Rosebery's keen interest in the issues at stake aroused him from a bed of sickness, where he had some weeks before lain seriously ill of scarlet fever, to entertain his distinguished guest and promote the success of the campaign by every means which he, as a Peer, was permitted to use during an election. His Lordship had taken a house at 120 George Street, Edinburgh, so that Mr Gladstone might be suitably entertained in the very heart of the old grey city, and be spared the fatigue of travelling to and from Dalmeny, seven miles away. The aged statesman's speeches in and around Edinburgh were regarded at the time as little less than marvellous from one of his advanced years, but twelve years later he was to give a still more extraordinary performance.

The election, which took place on 5th April and so became the keynote of the campaign throughout the country, resulted in the return of Mr Gladstone by a majority of two hundred and eleven votes over the Earl of Dalkeith, eldest son of the Duke of Buccleuch. A remarkable demonstration was made by the citizens of Edinburgh outside the house in George Street, from the upper windows of which, his face lighted up by candles held at each side of him, the

white-haired hero of many Parliamentary fights returned his thanks to the multitude. Lord Rosebery, naturally, was called upon to speak: "The Election is over," he said, "and I am unmuzzled. As a Midlothian man I can tell you that no Midlothian man, however old he may be, or however long he may have to live, will have spent a prouder night than this. It is a great night for Midlothian, a great night for Scotland, a great night for your County Member, a great night for Great Britain, aye, and a great night for the world. . . . It has been the fortune of this County to be chosen as the central battle-field of that great contest that is being waged at this moment. In the County of Midlothian has been fought, not a battle between Whig and Tory, or Liberal and Conservative, but a battle of Constitutional Government and of oppressed nationalities throughout the world."

Thus began, in the most auspicious way to the brilliant young Peer, his public association with one of the greatest statesmen of our time; of whom Lord Salisbury, his greatest political opponent in later years, has said: "His was the most brilliant intellect that has ever been applied to the service of the State since Parliamentary government began." How vital a part in Lord Rosebery's fortunes as a public man this friendship has played will be seen as our narrative advances.

CHAPTER IV.

GLADSTONE AND ROSEBERY.

CONSIDERING the prominent position to which Lord Rosebery had attained in the counsels of his party, and the conspicuous ability for statesmanship of which he had given promise, it would not have been surprising had he taken office in the new Gladstone Government. Indeed, from all quarters hopes were expressed that he would be included in the Cabinet which Mr Gladstone had been called upon to form as a result of the general election, and leading journals of both political parties urged his inclusion. It was felt that the strongly patriotic and lofty Imperial spirit which many of his public speeches had breathed fitted him for office at a time when foreign affairs were of prime importance. Not, of course, that any one seriously suggested he should try his 'prentice hand at statesmanship as the holder of the foreign portfolio, but the feeling was general that a young statesman of such parts as Lord Rosebery possessed, free from the grosser taints of partisanship and tenacious of a bold foreign policy, would

be a guarantee of strength in the new Liberal Government. However, when the names of the Cabinet were announced, that of Lord Rosebery was conspicuously absent from the list, but it soon became known that he himself was responsible for this. With a shrewdness which some of his warmest admirers probably lacked, he is understood to have foreseen that his acceptance of office might have been liable to misinterpretation, in view of the prominent part he had taken in awakening and shaping Liberal opinion in the North. Moreover, considering his youth, he could well afford to wait for such distinction as the rank of Cabinet Minister might bring, and his chief desire at the moment being to promote the interests of the party which he believed at that time to be acting for the true welfare of the country, he was probably justified in refusing office and thereby making it impossible for his enemies of the baser sort to insinuate that his fervid enthusiasm for the return of the Liberals to power had in it the slightest taint of personal interest. It is noticeable that in spite of, or, it may be, because of, his immense popularity with moderate politicians of both sides, there have not been wanting those—both of his own party and his natural political antagonists—who have been ever ready to revile him and misinterpret his commonest actions. In a leading article which appeared in the *Times* of 2nd April 1880, that

journal, then the principal organ of Liberalism, spoke of his Lordship's "rare modesty" in declining an honour "as one too great for his present experience," and regretted that his honourable scruples had led him to the decision we have stated.

But if Lord Rosebery had voluntarily debarred himself from office, he had now grown into a social favourite of the first rank, and with the co-operation of his charming and accomplished wife—who was known to be an ardent Liberal like himself—his London home speedily became a centre of the most brilliant society of which the Liberal party, then at its zenith, could boast. During his bachelor days the Earl had lived at No. 2 Berkeley Square, a house admirably adapted to the requirements of a young unmarried Peer; but after his wedding Miss Rothschild's town house at No. 107 Piccadilly became their London home until, in 1881, his Lordship took a seven years' lease of the palatial Lansdowne House, and here in those palmy days of Mr Gladstone's administration the Earl and Countess entertained in princely style.

In the spring many of their guests were received at Mentmore, Leighton Buzzard, and The Durdans, Epsom. The former was the seat of the Countess before her marriage, and the late Professor Blackie, who was a close friend and warm admirer of the young Earl, has given us a peep within its doors about the time of which we write. He says: "Here I am in

the central hall of a wonderful Italian sort of house, or rather palace; all full of pillars and porticoes, and gold and glass, and Venetian velvet, and French Gobelins, and clear out-look into the undulant greenery of this soft and luxuriant country." He also gives this characteristic description of an evening at Mentmore: "I arrived in time for an eight o'clock dinner; party small and snug, little more than the family. Mr Hayward, the prose translator of 'Faust,' and Mr Dasent, the Norseman, whom all the world knows. Conversation full of political anecdotes and English chaff. After dinner the Countess sang 'Auld Robin Gray' with great force and taste." And again: "This morning the house has almost wholly swarmed off to the metropolis, leaving me with the baby Sybil, a wonderful production with large blue eyes and serene temper."

For The Durdans at Epsom Lord Rosebery is said to have a great affection, though it is the smallest of his many beautiful homes.

In Parliament the voice of the popular young Peer was now being heard more frequently than before. His words were also commanding increased attention from both parties of the State, but before taking office he cannot be said to have been a frequent speaker in the House. It was not long, however, before he was eventually induced to identify himself in an official capacity with the Government in power.

In the autumn of 1881 he agreed to become Under-Secretary of the Home Office, under somewhat peculiar circumstances. At that time there was no Secretary of State attending exclusively to Scottish affairs, and it was felt that some assistance should be given to the Home Secretary (Sir William Harcourt) in order to facilitate the progress of Scottish business. Lord Rosebery's admitted knowledge of the needs and wants of Scotland, not less than his sympathy with the aspirations of his fellow-countrymen, fitted him in every way for this work, as it was understood that the Under-Secretary would devote his attention entirely to Scotland. The post was an onerous one, presenting no opportunities for showy Parliamentary display, and offering to its holder nothing but the certainty of hard work. By accepting it, Lord Rosebery gave eloquent proof of the fact that he desired to render the State some service, and not merely to accumulate empty honours.

He applied himself to the duties of the position with characteristic energy, and performed his work as though his daily bread depended thereon. In this way he was soon able to so advance such administrative affairs in Scotland as claimed immediate attention, that his countrymen speedily experienced the real value of his services, and he was popularly regarded in the North as "the Minister for Scotland." But—and here we arrive at the first inkling of an

opposition with which the Earl has had to reckon on many occasions, and with which, doubtless, it will be his lot to battle to the end—it was thought by some that his position in the House of Lords unfitted him for his work in the Home Department. No evidence of how well that work had been done could have been expected to weigh with those who took this stand. Lord Rosebery, probably more than any other statesman of our day, has realised the truth of the old Biblical saying, "A man's foes are they of his own household."

In his delightful sketch of the Earl, which appears in "An Edinburgh Eleven," Mr J. M. Barrie says: "The first time I ever saw Lord Rosebery was in Edinburgh, when I was a student, and I flung a clod of earth at him. He was a Peer; those were my politics." In this happy phrase the humorist clothes a truth in the garb of a jest; for there is little doubt that those who agitated against Lord Rosebery's presence at the Home Office were, metaphorically, throwing clods at him.

In the autumn of this year his Lordship was very busy with platform appearances in many parts of England and Scotland and his official duties, at which he continued to work steadily during 1882—a year that was mainly noteworthy for the attention which the Irish Question occupied, and the rumblings of political upheaval which were then beginning to be

heard. His Lordship's social leadership had become an accepted fact, and Lansdowne House, which he now occupied, was regarded by the Liberal party as their *salon*, the gatherings of the Earl and Countess there being attended by Mr Gladstone and all the distinguished Liberals of the day.

By June of the succeeding year Lord Rosebery, exasperated, it is believed, by the attacks of some members of his own party, resigned his post at the Home Office—Mr Heneage, who had been prominent in the movement against him, pointing out that it was the first time in fifty years that a Liberal Under-Secretary had sat in the Upper House. Nor were there wanting gossips who set down his resignation to differences between him and Sir William Harcourt. Here, perhaps, we have the beginning of all the gossip which has brought his Lordship's name and the Baronet's into collision in the popular mind. Sir William might have been thought to have exploded any such rumours by his straightforward statement in the House of Commons, when he pointed out that the arrangement whereby Lord Rosebery had become a colleague of his was never meant to be more than a temporary one; that his Lordship had always desired a different and more permanent arrangement for dealing with Scottish business. He further said, in the most emphatic way: "As to the relations between Lord Rosebery and myself, they have been

for many years, and, I am happy to say, are still, those of the closest political friendship and personal affection, which has never been disturbed for a single moment." While we may dismiss any suggestion of friction between these two distinguished statesmen, we cannot doubt that Lord Rosebery's position in the House of Lords and the opposition already hinted at were the real causes of his resignation. He himself has said, referring to this matter: "It was then found that that office was a dangerous one to be entrusted to a Peer, and under the pressure of public opinion, overwhelming, as I understand, on that subject, I had to relinquish it. It was then that I took a solemn determination I would never again relinquish any office on that objection."

The fact of Lord Rosebery's being a Peer is truly one of the chief difficulties which present themselves to everyone who attempts to furnish an estimate of his career. At one moment it would seem as if his Peerage had been the foundation of his fortune, giving him, so to say, from the day of his entrance into public life, an elevated and commanding platform; offering him advantages which, coupled with his own rare abilities, made it inevitable that he should play a conspicuous part in the history of his time. On the other hand, by reason of his political attachments, his Peerage sometimes assumes

the aspect of an old man of the sea about his neck, preventing him from attaining to the full measure of usefulness of which many think him capable. It is alternatively his strength and his weakness; his fortune and his misfortune; and he himself, if we may judge from his many public utterances on the subject, is in two minds how to view the matter.

But so far as his work at the Home Office is concerned, his tenure of that position was not to be without a very real and permanent result. His opinions expressed before taking up that work, and his experiences in the discharge of it, were mainly responsible for the creation of the Scottish Secretaryship in 1885, an act that has given much satisfaction to the people of the Northern kingdom.

Freed from the cares and worries of his official round, the Earl was able in the second half of 1883 to realise a long cherished wish of his by making a journey round the world in company with the Countess; the children, of whom there were now four, being left under charge of their aunt, Lady Leconfield. As this tour and the educational influence which it exerted upon his Lordship fulfilled an important part in the development of his ideas of Imperial policy, it will receive attention at some length in our next chapter.

Home again in March of 1884, the Earl's career as a rising statesman had now commenced in earnest. In

June we find him, in the House of Lords, moving for the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the best means for promoting the efficiency of that Assembly. The question is one which he has raised on various occasions and always advocated with great earnestness. It also speaks well for his courage as a reformer that in a House where his Lordship's political supporters form a mere drop in the sea he should have stood forth, time and again, to urge upon his hearers the need of bringing, as he believes they need to bring, their Assembly into line with modern requirements. The County Franchise Bill, which had been introduced by Mr Gladstone on the last day of the month prior to Lord Rosebery's return, was also a subject of his Lordship's advocacy in the House, and one of his greatest Parliamentary efforts was his address in support of the second reading of that measure. The picture which he then drew, of a House of Lords in opposition to the popularly expressed will of the people, and his solemn warning that if they rejected this Bill they might strike a fatal blow at their own existence, is said to have exercised such an effect on the House, hostile though it was to the Bill, that it resulted in efforts towards a compromise. The Bill, however, was rejected by an overwhelming majority. But Mr Gladstone did not take the heroic course of a dissolution in order to again appeal to the country

on the subject. He went down into Midlothian again as Lord Rosebery's guest and conducted another campaign in which, of course, the Bill was the all-pervading topic. An autumn session of Parliament was summoned, and after a keen controversy a compromise was effected, and the Franchise Bill eventually became law on 13th November.

The year 1884 was in many ways to be one of great moment to Lord Rosebery. We have seen that in the House of Lords, after his return from abroad, he had much to do in promoting the success of Mr Gladstone's legislation. In the autumn he entertained at Dalmeny the Prince and Princess of Wales and their children, and when the Royal Party visited the Forestry Exhibition in Edinburgh, the enthusiasm for his Lordship whenever he appeared was only second to that with which the future King was greeted. His Royal guests greatly enjoyed the days spent under the Earl's hospitable roof, and they had only been two days gone when Mr and Mrs Gladstone arrived for what may be called the third Midlothian campaign.

Again were the remarkable scenes of the great statesman's previous visits repeated, and again was the ever-growing popularity of the brilliant young Peer, whose association with Mr Gladstone was now so firmly established, exhibited in the most obvious

way. The *Scotsman* remarked, when referring to Mr Gladstone's great speech at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange on 30th August: "An incident of the proceedings which it is impossible not to notice was the unmistakable evidences of the great, cordial and growing feeling with which Lord Rosebery is regarded by the Liberal party. Few politicians receive such flattering marks of confidence as Lord Rosebery received on Saturday in the assemblage both outside and inside the Corn Exchange. He found it impossible to resist the calls made for him in the meeting, and when he rose he had the whole of the vast audience standing before him and cheering vociferously. It was a reception which any statesman might envy."

On 11th September his Lordship, whose interest in the working classes has been deep and enduring, attended the Trades Union Congress at Aberdeen, giving an interesting speech on industrial questions; while he also had the honour of receiving the freedom of the Granite City on the same occasion. He subsequently spent some days of the same month in a visit to his property at Postwick, near Norwich, which came into the Primrose family by the marriage in 1764 of Neil, Earl of Rosebery, to the daughter and heiress of Sir Randal Ward. The Earl has placed a memorial window in the Postwick church to the memory of his grandfather. He next returned

North again, as Mr Gladstone was expected for a private visit at Dalmeny on 23rd September, and on the afternoon of that day Lord Rosebery had the misfortune, while riding near Dalmeny, to be thrown from his horse and have his collar-bone broken. As a result, his Lordship was, much to his regret, unable to devote his usual personal attention to Mr and Mrs Gladstone.

It was on private visits such as these that Mr Gladstone was able to indulge his affection for Lord Rosebery's two beautiful houses, Dalmeny Park and Barnbougle Castle, which are almost within a stone's throw of each other by the silver Forth. The district is rich in historical interest and beauty of landscape. The mansion of Dalmeny is a modern structure, erected in the early years of last century by the fourth Earl; but Barnbougle Castle, a few hundred yards away, was the ancient stronghold of the Mowbrays, restored within recent years by the Earl, who is understood to have decided on the reconstruction of the picturesque ruin because it was a landmark to mariners sailing in the Firth of Forth and was set down upon the charts used by them. "Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy forefathers have set," is the apt quotation inserted by the Earl in a panel on the east side of the renovated building. Mr Gladstone spent many delightful days among Lord Rosebery's well-stocked book-shelves and in

wandering about the beautiful park which surrounds the house and castle. How much his Lordship rejoiced in these visits of the veteran statesman is seen in the fact that the room occupied by Mr Gladstone at Dalmeny is marked with an inscription let in above the door, "Mr Gladstone's bedroom."

In December the Earl was again addressing himself to the question of the reform of the House of Lords, and approached a large number of Peers with a view to taking concerted action on the subject and so keeping it without the limits of party politics; but there does not seem to have been any marked response to his advances.

The early months of 1885 were very critical ones for the Ministry. General Gordon had been sent out to the Soudan in the hope of persuading the Soudanese chiefs to submit themselves once more to Egyptian government, but soon found himself cooped up in Khartoum and fighting for existence against the Mahdi's hordes of fanatics. Then followed Lord Wolseley's brilliant march with a relieving force; only, alas, to arrive too late. When the news of Gordon's death was known, public feeling in England was greatly stirred and the Government came in for much criticism; votes of censure directed against it only being averted by small majorities. Mr Gladstone's Government, in a word, was sore beset, and Lord Rosebery's opinion of the situation will be

gathered from the following remarks in a speech to the Epsom Liberal Club on 9th February: "There is one topic which is now filling our minds—a topic which has seized hold of the national mind to the exclusion of all others. I need not say what that subject is. You cannot walk through the humblest or obscurest village without some labourer coming and asking if there is any news of *kim*. There is no need to mention the name. All know who 'him' is. I cannot help feeling as if the sorrow which has befallen Great Britain has come to test the spirit and patriotism of the country. The greatness of a nation, like the greatness of an individual, is shown not in the moment of prosperity, but in moments of adversity. . . . But even if Gordon is dead, we should not mourn. We know that he has died the death he would have chosen —a soldier's death upon the field of duty. To every man on earth death comes sooner or later, and how can a man die better than for 'the ashes of his fathers and the temple of his gods'?" Continuing, Lord Rosebery said he "had been rather shocked to see that one of the first thoughts in many minds appeared to be that the fall of Khartoum involved the fall of the Government. In this hideous crisis it never occurred to him to think of who might be occupying places or who might be wishing to occupy places He did not pretend to have concurred with the policy of the Government in Egypt. On more than one

occasion he had exercised the right of a private judgment, and had ventured to say that a bolder and clearer course might have been adopted. But he knew that the Government had had to deal with a situation of unexampled difficulty, and, so far from thinking that it would be important to turn the Government out, it was a time in which he trusted every Englishman wished to strengthen the Government in every way. . . . This disaster was full of lessons. He hoped it would, if even only for a moment, unite the nation. He should be glad if it raised the nation, if only for a moment, out of the atmosphere of party, in which by various circumstances we were compelled to live."

It is to the lasting credit of the Earl, who had resigned his previous office in the day of the Government's strength, that, at so critical a time in the fortunes of his party and the reputation of his venerated chief, he should have resumed office now as Lord Privy Seal and First Commissioner of Works, with a seat in the Cabinet. The effect of his Lordship's action may be judged from the following comment which appeared in the *Daily News*: "Lord Rosebery brings into it [the Cabinet] a new and fresh force of intellect and character, a keen perception of the facts and forces of political life, and an independence of judgment which is essentially needed in public men. Routine and

formula have not mastered him. Lord Rosebery's personal devotion to Mr Gladstone has been proved; his enthusiastic affection for him is well known. But Lord Rosebery has not been overpowered by that ascendancy of character and intellect which sometimes seems to absorb inferior men into the mind and purpose of the chief. He has shown himself to be vertebrate and not molluscous; and without that ostentatious or unseemly parade of difference which marks the too consciously inferior person, has known how to guard his own freedom of opinion and give forcible expression to his views. His entrance into the Cabinet is in itself a contribution to the more cordial union of the Empire. It will be welcomed throughout the Colonies. It is also, we hope, a sign that a somewhat quicker apprehension of our relations with foreign Powers, and greater promptitude both of speech and action, will mark the conduct of the Government. His acceptance of ministerial responsibility is an event of political significance as regards the present, and is full of hope for the future."

It would be as absurd, of course, to credit Lord Rosebery with changing the tone of the Cabinet as it is to accuse an individual minister of precipitating a war; but it is generally admitted that his influence had not a little to do with the decided stand taken by Mr Gladstone's Govern-

ment towards Russia on the Afghan question which occasioned the famous vote of credit for eleven millions. At all events, it will be admitted by those of all parties that Lord Rosebery proved by his action at this critical moment his devotion to his leader, his party and his country.

CHAPTER V.

THE APOSTLE OF IMPERIALISM.

LORD ROSEBERY has shown in many ways that he is a public man because he is an Imperialist. Speaking at Leeds in 1888, he avowed that the dominant passion of his life was his attachment to the cause of Imperial unity, which by all means in his power, in season and out of season, he has striven to promote. It is one of the very earliest notes which he sounded in his public speeches, and going back to that remarkable address of his to the Social Science Congress in 1874, in which he may be said to have held forth the ideals he has since striven to realise, we find him stating in the most convincing way his conception of sane and sound Imperialism as opposed to those schemes of foreign adventure which he has characterised frequently as "wild-cat Imperialism": "We are shut up by the sea with our surging myriads—a source of strength if guided and controlled; if not, an immeasurable volcanic power. Many of them must go forth to people the world. Our race has colonised and colonises, has influence and influences,

and in future ages seems likely further to colonise and influence a great part of the habitable globe. So great has been our field of influence that we can only view it with awe. It has been, and is, a great destiny for this country to sway so mightily the destinies of the universe. But the great privilege involves a sacred trust. We must look to it that the fertile race we send forth to the waste places of the earth is a race physically, morally, and intellectually equal to its high duties. At present we will not compel our children to be educated, however rudely; at present in one of our cities nearly a quarter of the infants born die before they are one year old. In one of your sections you propose to discuss, 'What are the best means of drawing together the interests of the United Kingdom, India and the Colonies?' I submit that the primary means are to send forth colonists who shall be worthy of the country they leave and the destiny they seek.

"The different agencies I have noticed to-night all tend to this: Whether we keep them in England or they pass from us, we must look to the nurture of this race of kings. We annually distribute through the world a population nearly as large as the population of Birmingham; in the last two years more emigrants have left our shores than there are inhabitants in Glasgow and Dundee put together. After all, whatever our commerce or political in-

fluence may be, this is the most gigantic enterprise in which this or any other nation can be engaged; and the responsibility of its success, not merely for the present, but for countless future generations, lies with us. Will this great stream pass from us a torpid flood, composed of emigrants like some we now send forth, who shake the dust from their feet, and swear undying enmity to us; or shall it be a broad and beneficent river of life, fertilising as the Nile, beloved as the Ganges, sacred as the Jordan, separated from us, indeed, by the ocean, but like that fabled fountain Arethuse, which, passing under the sea from Greece into Sicily, retained its original source in Arcadia? We do not know what our fate may be; we have no right, perhaps, to hope that we may be an exception to the rule by which nations have their period of growth, and of grandeur, and of decay. It may be that all we most esteem shall fade away like the glories of Babylon. But if we have done our duty well, even though our history should pass away, and our country become

> 'An island salt and bare,
> The haunt of seals, and orcs, and seamews' clang,'

she may be remembered not ungratefully as the affluent mother of giant commonwealths and peaceful empires that shall perpetuate the best qualities of the race."

This is a splendid passage—one of the finest, indeed, from that remarkable address—and while it embodies a view of Imperialism with which the vast majority of the British people, be their political leanings what they may, must agree, it will also stand as a characteristic sample of Lord Rosebery's platform style, in which the practical is so cleverly blended with the poetical and picturesque. All his speeches display a curious and sometimes dangerous fondness for metaphor. They are always full of colour, and sparkle with a touch of native humour which illumines even the least attractive subjects. It is also a difficult thing to mention any great speech of Lord Rosebery's in which there is no reference to something that Pitt said or did, or something that Pitt would or should have said or done. This is one of the Earl's little weaknesses, but it must be confessed that he always brings in his beloved Pitt to excellent purpose and seldom conjures up his ghost without useful result.

It is one of the most hopeful portents for the future of Lord Rosebery that he has consistently pleaded for a view of our Imperial duties which rigorously excludes lesser consideration of party politics. He has invariably stood firm for a non-political foreign policy, for—to quote his speech to the Edinburgh students in November of 1878—"a patriotism which should seek the interests of the country apart from

party considerations." This statesmanlike attitude whenever our foreign relationships are in question he has not merely assumed on the platform, but both in and out of office he has been steadfast to this principle. Even at times when he may not have been without promptings to pursue a less patriotic path, he has chosen to put the interests of his country above those of his party, and this, too, when, if he had been more of a politician and less of a statesman, he might have found small difficulty in apologising for an opposite course. It is because Lord Rosebery is, above everything, an Imperialist in the true and best sense of the word, that his future is full of interest, heavy with possibilities; for, be it for good or ill, no statesman in the near future, and certainly no leader of the new century, is likely to be acceptable to the people unless he can accept and turn to the best advantage the remarkable spirit of Imperialism which recent events in the history of our country has engendered.

That Lord Rosebery will not ignore popular opinion on the question of Empire we cannot doubt, since that would be fully in accord with views and hopes which he has expressed in the past. During the years in which he stood forth as the head and front of the movement for Imperial Federation, his one great purpose in that crusade was to awaken the public mind to a full sense of our Imperial

obligations. Speaking to the Trades Union Congress at Aberdeen in September of 1884, he gave it as his opinion that nothing could be done in the way of drawing our far-spread Empire into closer bonds of Union "without the impulse that came from the popular will." He urged that the subject should become one of principle and creed with the working classes before it became one of practical politics. On the same occasion he affirmed that the bond which united the various component parts of this Empire must either become stronger or weaker, and could not continue to exist in its then very indefinite form. Here was an anticipation of the battle cry which resounded through the country during the Boer war.

Although, as we have seen, his Lordship's convictions on this weighty question were deep-seated and avowed in the earliest years of his public life, it is true that we can trace very distinctly the influence which made him the apostle of Imperialism. His close study of the career of the elder Pitt had, no doubt, much to do in his young days with fostering his faith in Britain's Imperial mission, but it is to his voyage round the world in the latter part of 1882 that we owe in large measure the fervour of his later advocacy of the Imperial idea. This memorable journey of his was no haphazard affair, but had been deliberately planned and long looked forward to as an essential part of his preparation for the *rôle* which

he was ambitious of playing in the history of his time—the *rôle* of a great Imperial statesman.

The Earl and Countess, on this voyage, went first to America, where their doings attracted wide attention. The thoroughness with which his Lordship examined at first hand the life of the American people, and studied their great public institutions, proved that his journey was no mere traveller's round of sight-seeing, but a self-imposed mission.

In October the voyagers sailed from San Francisco for Australia, where they arrived at Sidney early in December. From Sidney they went to Melbourne, where they were entertained by the Premier; and wherever his Lordship appeared he was the subject of great enthusiasm, as our Colonial cousins were well acquainted with his Imperial aspirations, and looked upon him as the champion of their interests at the centre of the Empire's life. It may be said of him that while in Australia "he went everywhere and saw everything." He spoke at various banquets in his honour at Sidney, Melbourne, and other towns, and his references to Colonial affairs were invariably received with rapturous applause. There is a notable passage in one of these speeches which should be quoted in this connection: "There is an old tradition—I don't know if it remains good—that in the British Royal Dockyards every rope that is

manufactured, from the largest cable to the smallest twine, has a single red thread through it which pervades the whole strand, and which, if unpacked, destroys the whole rope. That was a sign of the Royal production of those ropes. Although I distrust metaphors, I believe that that metaphor holds good to some extent of the British Empire. It is held together by this single red line, and that red line is the union of the races. When I say the union of races, I mean to imply the community of memories, of work, of object, and of aim, which is implied by the communion of races. I have always hoped that that communion of races might exist as long as my life lasted; but since my visit to Australia it will become a passion with me to endeavour to preserve that union, and to serve this country of Australia, of which I can never have any but the most happy and delightful memories."

The Colonial newspapers, which recorded his movements most minutely, were unanimous in pointing him out as one from whom Australians had much to hope. The *Melbourne Argus*, in commenting upon the speech from which we have just quoted, wrote: "When he had finished, the audience could understand why, apart from his friendship for Mr Gladstone, the Earl of Rosebery holds a high position in Imperial politics and is regarded with hope as a coming man."

An Australian statesman, speaking at the banquet given to his Lordship in Melbourne Town Hall, remarked that while Greeks, Italians, and Bulgarians had received much sympathy from Mr Gladstone, he hoped the young Earl would now ask the veteran statesman to show some little sympathy for three millions of his own flesh and blood.

A farewell banquet to his Lordship was given at Adelaide, as he was unable to carry out his original intention of visiting New Zealand. "We have left a pledge to fortune in New Zealand yet unvisited," he wrote to the Mayor of Sidney.

The Earl and Countess returned to England by way of India, and we can quite understand how sincerely he spoke when, at the Liverpool Reform Club in December of 1884, he said, referring to his voyage round the world: "I can conscientiously say that no six months of my life have given me equal instruction or profit."

It cannot be doubted that this undertaking of the Earl's has profoundly affected the development of his Imperial ideas, and if it were necessary, it would be an easy matter to illustrate in detail how large a place the things he saw and the knowledge he gained during those six months have ever since occupied in his mind. Although the Imperial Federation League, which was formed in November of 1884 under his auspices, in co-operation with the late Mr Forster, has

ceased to exist, and the exact programme which it espoused is no longer before the country, it was privileged to exercise a great influence in forming and formulating public opinion on this question of a closer union between the Colonies themselves, and between them and the mother land. It was not without considerable adverse criticism that the Earl advocated the idea of Imperial Federation, and even so recently as December of 1887 we find the *Spectator* defining as one of his Lordship's weaknesses for a Liberal leader his "leaning to a federation of the Colonies, not merely as a precautionary measure against needless mistakes, but as a final constitution of the Government of the Empire." He may, however, be permitted to feel that his efforts towards a more intimate union of and with our Colonies played no unimportant part in bringing about the federation of the Australian Colonies with which, it is universally believed, the twentieth century has opened in a most auspicious manner for the British Empire.

In January of the present year we find the Earl warning our merchants that the war of the future is to be a war of trade, but he is not one of those so-called Imperialists who see in the extension of British possessions nothing more worthy than an increase of our trading facilities. He has said that if he regarded the Empire simply as a means to paint so much of the world red, or as an emporium for

trade, he should not ask us to work for it. "Land hunger was apt to become land fever, and land fever was apt to breed land indigestion, and however important and desirable in itself, could never be the foundation of Empire." Empires founded on trade alone must irresistibly crumble, but the Empire that was sacred to him, was sacred for this reason—that he believed it to be the noblest example yet known to mankind of free, adaptable, just government.

One of the most notable speeches ever delivered by the Earl on Imperialism was his Rectorial Address to the Glasgow students on 16th November 1900, his theme being "Questions of Empire." All his old charm of manner and profundity of conviction were displayed again on this occasion, and though his Lordship said little that he had not said before, his speech appeared at full length in the leading journals of the country. He pointed out that the question is no longer that of winning an Empire, but of maintaining one; he pleaded for special training in our academies and universities which would better equip the youth of the country for the Empire's work than the present system does. He urged the importance of teaching modern languages rather than the dead classic tongues.

It will thus be admitted that Lord Rosebery has by word and deed proved himself well worthy to bear the title we have given him. He has been, truly, and

still remains, the apostle of Imperialism, and it may be that the future will present him with the opportunity of performing on behalf of this Empire greater services than he has yet been permitted to render. Come what may, he will ever stand out from the ruck of contemporary statesmen as one in whom the Imperial idea has reached its loftiest, its noblest, its purest stage. "It is," he says, "a cause for which anyone might be content to live; it is a cause for which, if needs be, anyone might be content to die."

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE CABINET.

To resume the order of our narrative. We now find Lord Rosebery occupying a seat in Mr Gladstone's Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal and First Commissioner of Works, and we have been told that his acceptance of office at a very critical time in the fortunes of Mr Gladstone, was a source of general satisfaction throughout the country.

A visit which Lord Rosebery paid to Berlin soon after his joining the Government was the subject of much speculation at the time, and it was popularly believed that his presence in the German capital had something to do with the dispute between England and Russia which was then on the *tapis*. But the explanation given was that his Lordship was merely paying a return visit to Count Herbert Bismarck, who had been his guest in London some time before, the Count and the Earl being great friends. Even although the social side of the visit may have been its public excuse, it is scarcely likely that a Cabinet Minister

at a time of crisis—and that Cabinet Minister Lord Rosebery—would allow a social duty to precede an official one, and the supposition that his Lordship's visit to Berlin had in it something of a political mission was probably not wide of the remark.

On 21st April 1885, shortly after the Earl's return, the Premier received a vote of credit for £11,000,000, part of which was ostensibly for the Soudan expedition, and the remainder, or perhaps the lion's share, so far as the public could guess, for "special preparations." The nature of these it was not difficult to imagine, as Russia was mobilising her troops, and the prospect of an amicable settlement of the Afghan question appeared to be remote. Happily, with one of those dramatic changes which international crises often produce, the situation suddenly cleared, and early in May it was known that the risk of war had passed, Russia having assumed a very conciliatory attitude. The credit for this has generally been assigned to the firm and unflinching stand taken by Mr Gladstone's Cabinet, and it is only fair to suppose that the youngest Minister in the Government was not without some share in the stiffening of its back.

Despite this distinct victory for Mr Gladstone, the popular feeling so recently aroused by the unhappy fate of General Gordon was not to be readily allayed. Profiting by this, Lord Randolph Churchill, in association with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Lord

George Hamilton, continued their embarrassing attentions to the Government, with the result that on 9th June an amendment by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to the second reading of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, declaring that the proposed increase of duties on beer and spirits was inequitable in the absence of a corresponding addition to the duties on wine, was carried by 264 votes to 252, the Parnellites voting with the Opposition. Mr Gladstone had warned the House before the vote was taken that the issue was one of life or death to the Ministry, and, consequently, at the reassembling of the House later in the same day he announced the resignation of his Government. Lord Salisbury decided to accept office, his Government being formed on 24th June, and both parties commenced preparations for an early contest, which was considered to be inevitable.

Even during this brief experience as a Cabinet Minister, Lord Rosebery, by sheer force of character, had succeeded in proving himself an important member of the Government. Mr Gladstone himself, in a letter written to Mr John Cowan, chairman of the Midlothian Liberal Association, on the occasion of a meeting of that body presided over by Lord Rosebery on 29th June, said: "I rejoice that you meet under the presidency of my friend and late colleague Lord Rosebery, who is to play, if his life be spared, an important part in the future politics of the United

Kingdom." So that once again was the Earl the subject of prophecy, and this time by one who did not prophesy without knowing.

The great banquet given in his honour on 13th November of the same year by the Scottish Liberals—one of the historic political gatherings of last century—indicated the unassailable position as a statesman which he now held in public estimation. Among the mottoes displayed in the decorations of the Music Hall, Edinburgh, where the banquet took place, were several which, in the happiest way, grouped together the ideals steadfastly held before the country and before himself by his Lordship; such as: "I speak—I have spoken—for Unity and for the Empire"; "Closer Union with the Colonies"; "Reform of the House of Lords"; "Scottish Administration—the welfare of the Scottish people"; and, "Scottish History and Literature." The Earl of Stair presided over the great assembly, and among those who gathered together to do honour to Lord Rosebery was Mr Gladstone, Mr (now Lord) Goschen, Mr (now Sir) Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and many other prominent members of the Liberal party. The Earl of Aberdeen, in proposing one of the toasts, also joined the ranks of the prophets, asserting that Lord Rosebery was marked out, not only by his own striking qualities, but by the perceptive instincts of

his country, as the future leader of the Liberal party.

Meanwhile Lord Salisbury's Government had permitted the Crimes Act to lapse in Ireland, and the negotiations which were taking place between the Conservatives and Mr Parnell's followers gave rise to much curiosity and comment. Both of the great political parties were in a very restive condition, each having to devise some means of mollifying the Parnellites. But the Liberals were in a specially critical state, not a few of the more moderate members of the party, and even some of prominent position in its counsels, fighting shy of what they fancied to be the too socialistic influence of the Birmingham group. In the month of the Government's defeat, Lord Rosebery had avowed himself in favour of some form of Home Rule. He then pointed out that nearly every experiment had been tried in Ireland, and all had failed more or less conspicuously. The experiment of the future, he considered, would have to be in the direction of giving Ireland control of her own affairs, and his own remedy for the existing discontent was described as "a liberal measure of local self-government all round, with special and exceptional treatment for Ireland."

His Lordship was thoroughly alive to the dubious condition of his party. In his speech at the great

banquet at Edinburgh, already mentioned, he spoke very plainly on the subject, thus: "You can either have a Liberal party, or you can have what is equally interesting in some respects, more noble, but not so practical, a collection of knights errant, all moved by their own individual ideas of chivalry, or following their own Queen of Beauty, an assembly estimable beyond everything in themselves, guided by the highest impulses, interesting as a survival, but no more able to cope with a united and disciplined party than those Paladins of the Middle Ages would have been able to meet the artillery of the nineteenth century." In fact, he urged upon his hearers that the question at the coming election for them was not this or that particular reform to which they might be personally attached, but whether or not they wished to have a Liberal party in the next Parliament.

The Earl's services as a public speaker on party platforms during these exciting days were in great request, and he spoke in many parts of the country between the fall of the Government and the general election, which took place in December, resulting in the return of 335 Liberals, 249 Tories, and 86 Irish Nationalists. Lord Salisbury took office, with the assistance of the Irish vote, in a house that was now equally divided. The one obvious effect of the election had been to make the Irish question the

arbiter of party fortunes, and it seemed at the moment that the party which could deal with this most troublesome of problems would place itself in a position of great strength. But, as events were to prove, the Irish question was fated to be the evil genius of one great party's fortunes. Already the political influence of Mr Chamberlain and his friends was shaping itself into a channel which neither ran parallel with that of the Liberal party, nor promised to rejoin the main stream at any point. "The unauthorised programme" issued from Birmingham had been a feature of the election and was portentous for the days to come.

It was clear that unless Lord Salisbury's Government could introduce some heroic measure which would please his Parnellite allies, while not displeasing his English followers, he could not hope to retain office for any length of time. There was a section of the Conservatives that firmly believed in coercion, and another that seemed almost prepared to go as far as Lord Rosebery had promised, in dealing with Irish Local Government. But though on Monday, 25th January, the Premier announced in the House of Lords that the Government was about to introduce proposals to remedy "the terrible and scandalous condition of things" in the sister isle, the Chancellor of the Exchequer three days later announced that the Chief Secretary (Mr W. H. Smith)

would introduce a Coercion Bill for Ireland, and that the land question would subsequently receive attention. The defeat of the Ministry under these circumstances was a matter of course, yet, strangely enough, Lord Salisbury's Government expired after a very brief existence, not on the Irish question, but on an amendment to the Address moved by Mr Jesse Collings, expressing regret that the Government had proposed no measure for providing agricultural labourers with allotments. The amendment was supported by Mr Gladstone and Mr Chamberlain, and though strongly opposed by Lord Hartington and Mr Goschen, was carried by a majority of 79; so that, on the very night when the Chancellor of the Exchequer had promised coercive measures for Ireland, the Government was defeated on an item of Mr Chamberlain's "unauthorised programme."

On the Monday following this event it was known that the Government had resigned, and that Mr Gladstone was forming an administration, which took office on the 6th February 1886.

In the new Government Lord Rosebery was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, and of all the appointments none aroused more interest or created such general satisfaction.

An important step had been taken by the Earl not long before this time when, in the summer of 1885, he sold his racehorses and gave out his intention

of retiring from the Turf. One cannot but think that if he had remained as staunch to this decision as he has held to others it would have been greatly to his advantage; but after a lapse of some years he was unfortunately to resume his racing interests and to achieve the ambition of his sportive youth by winning the Derby.

The *Spectator* said at the time of Lord Rosebery's taking up the duties of the Foreign Office that, "It is nerve that is most needed in a Foreign Secretary, and all men say that Lord Rosebery possesses nerve." This is an opinion to which all who have followed his career will readily subscribe. It was very evident that there was no office in the State more suited to the gifts and character of his Lordship, or more acceptable to him. It brought out the best that was in him. All that intimate knowledge of foreign affairs which we have seen him steadily and conscientiously acquiring rendered him in every way an ideal man for this, the most important office of the State apart from that of Premier. That he delighted and rejoiced in the work, onerous though it was, we can perceive from this playful passage in which he referred some years later when again Foreign Minister, at a Royal Academy banquet, to the duties of the Foreign Secretary compared with those of his colleagues: "As he [the Home Secretary] opens and shuts the

prison doors of the country with an impartial hand, it would not do for him to indulge in any flights of fancy. But when I come to the other Secretaries of State, my mind enlarges. My noble friend the Secretary for the Colonies rules over an Empire on which the sun never sets, and it is impossible to say at any given moment on what particular part of the globe his mind may be reposing. My noble friend Lord Kimberley's mind reposes on 'India's coral strand.' His talk is of Oriental splendour, his dream is of Oriental luxury, only marred by the awful spectre of the constantly depreciating rupee. When we come to the next Secretary of State, Mr Campbell-Bannerman, I do not doubt, if he be a man of the boundless and virile imagination I believe him to be, sometimes, in dreams, he pictures to himself a British army taking the field in adequate numbers and with adequate equipment.

"But when I come to my own office, I transcend them all. I have only to open a red box to be possessed of that magic carpet which took its possessor wherever he would go. Perhaps sometimes it carries me a little farther than that. I open it, and find myself at once in those regions where a travelled monarch and an intellectual Minister are endeavouring to reconcile the realms of Xerxes and Darius with the needs of nineteenth century civilisation—I smell the scent of the roses,

and hear the song of the bulbul. I open another box, which enables me to share the sports of the fur-seal — his island loves, his boundless swims in the Pacific; I can even follow him to Paris and see him — the *corpus delicti* — laid on the table of the Court of Arbitration. I can go still further. I can transfer myself to the Southern Pacific, where three of the greatest States in the world are endeavouring, not always with apparent success, to administer one of the smallest of islands — the island of Samoa—in close conjunction and alliance with one of our most brilliant men of letters. I will say this in virtue of my office—I follow every Court. Not a monarch leaves his capital on a journey but I am on the platform in the spirit if not in the body. I am in spirit in the gallery of every Parliament. I am ready and anxious — but not always successful—to be present at the signing of every treaty. I think I have laid sufficient claim before you to insist that, in future, when you consider Her Majesty's Ministers, you may not consider them merely as political creatures, but as persons who have also their imaginative side, as official Ariels roaming through time and space, not on broomsticks, but on boxes."

Though the Earl could be fanciful and humorous over the picturesque side of his work at Downing Street, he could be as firm as the Iron Chancellor in

his dealings with the Ambassadors of the great Powers, nor was he long at the Foreign Office before evidence of his firm hand was forthcoming. There was, for instance, the question of the port of Batoum, on which his Lordship adopted a line of policy that was generally commended for its firmness, and then there arose difficulties between Greece and Turkey which he handled with distinct success and the general approval of his country.

During those early days at the Foreign Office Lord Rosebery's social obligations, now greatly extended, were discharged in co-operation with his gifted wife in a brilliantly successful manner. His receptions at Lansdowne House and the Foreign Office were worthy of the best traditions of any of the great statesmen who had preceded him in his office. We cannot do better than turn again to Professor Blackie for a picture of a quiet luncheon party at Lansdowne House during the summer season of 1886: "We had a very pleasant party at Lansdowne House last Saturday. A little circular parlour with a dome above, and a little round table in the middle; with a few chosen guests, numbering eight in all, including mine host and hostess; Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Ferguson of Novar, a square-browed Scot with a bright open face; Drummond, the scientific religionist of the hour, tall and handsome; Villiers of the Foreign Office; and Calcraft of the Board of Trade."

While Professor Blackie thus gives us a "private view," Dr Oliver Wendell Holmes, the American author, supplies us with an excellent impression of a reception at the Foreign Office: "At half past eleven we walked over to the Foreign Office to Lady Rosebery's reception. There Mr Gladstone was of course the centre of a group, to which I was glad to add myself. His features were almost as familiar to me as my own. But I looked upon him with astonishment. For he stood before me with epaulets on his shoulders and a rapier at his side, as military in his aspect as if he had been Lord Wolseley, to whom I was introduced a short time afterwards. A great number of invitations had been given out for the reception at Lady Rosebery's—over two thousand, my companion heard it said. Whatever the number was, the crowd was very great—so great that one might well feel alarmed for the safety of any delicate person who was in the pack which formed itself at one place in the course of the evening. Some obstruction must have existed *à fronte*, and the *vis a tergo* became fearful in its pressure on those who were caught in the jam. But there was always a *deus ex machina* for us when we were in trouble. Afterwards we moved freely about the noble apartments. Lady Rosebery, who was kindness itself, would have us stay and sit down in comfort at the supper table, after the crowd had thinned, but we were tired with

all we had been through, and ordered our carriage. The most formidable thing about a London party is getting away from it. *C'est le dernier pas qui coûte.* A crowd of anxious persons in retreat is hanging about the windy door and the breezy stairway and the airy hall. A stentorian voice, hard as that of Rhadamanthus, exclaims: 'Lady Vere de Vere's carriage stops the way!' If my Lady Vere de Vere is not on hand, and that pretty quickly, off goes her carriage, and the stern voice bawls again: 'Mrs Smith's carriage stops the way.' Mrs Smith's particular Smith may be worth his millions and live in his marble palace; but if Mrs Smith thinks her coachman is going to stand with horses at that door until she appears, she is mistaken, for she is a minute late, and now the coach moves on and Rhadamanthus calls aloud: 'Mrs Brown's carriage stops the way.' . . . Half the lung fevers that carry off the great people," adds the Doctor, "are got waiting for their carriages."

Immersed in his official duties at the Foreign Office Lord Rosebery was, in a manner, free from the distractions which fell to Mr Gladstone's share now that the Liberal leader had boldly faced the prickly problem of Home Rule. The introduction of his first measure "for restoring order and peace to Ireland" had only succeeded in precipitating disorder and bitter party warfare in England. It is unnecessary to enter into

details on these events which, though forming an old story in the political history of our times, are still fresh in the memories of all. The cleavage in the Liberal ranks had definitely separated Lord Hartington, Mr Chamberlain, and other prominent Liberals from the policy of the Government, the defection of Mr John Bright being one of the most serious losses which Mr Gladstone had to witness in the ranks of his followers. But here again Lord Rosebery stood faithfully by his chief, and rendered him all the assistance in his power for the next great struggle that was impending.

Mr Gladstone threw himself, with amazing energy for one of his years, into another electoral campaign, going down to Midlothian as on previous occasions; but now at the most crucial period of his career, beset with difficulties which had sprung up within the ranks of his own party.

The Bill had been defeated in the second week of June, 1886, by a majority of thirty votes, ninety-three members of the Liberal party voting against the Government, and as a result of the election, which followed the resignation of the Ministry on 20th July, Lord Salisbury returned to power with the assistance of the Liberal Unionists, commanding a majority of one hundred and fourteen over Gladstonians and Parnellites.

Destined now to a long period of Opposition and

liberated once again from the care of office, Lord Rosebery, soon after the election, decided to take advantage of the turn of events by spending some time in foreign travel.

In the autumn of 1886, accompanied by Mr Munro Ferguson, who has always been a close friend of his Lordship, as he is a near neighbour of his in the North, the Earl and Countess started on a second visit to India, and he was now able to study the life of that great country at more leisure than was possible on his previous flying visit. He saw many parts of our vast Eastern empire and travelled as far inland as Quetta, also making a special journey to the ancient Portuguese city of Goa, where he was able to contrast his impressions of the teeming marts of modern India with the dead civilisation of a great colonising power of a former day.

He was back again in England by the spring of 1887, and the question of his future leadership was now beginning to exercise seriously the public mind. One writer in the *Spectator* said: "He has the fighting power of Sir William Harcourt; the moderation and fairness of Mr John Morley; the robustness of Mr Fowler, and the polish of Sir George Trevelyan." This correspondent also pointed out that his Lordship's wealth put him above the temptation of office-seeking, and that he had an innate genius for statesmanship. But the Editor of the *Spectator*, in com-

menting upon this letter, thought that "for the purpose of Prime Minister his Lordship had to be regarded as an untried man"; and went on to say: "The prospect of a young and untried nobleman, of genius, it may be admitted, but of genius of which no one knows the calibre, at the head of an administration, with such a demagogue as Sir William Harcourt as his lieutenant, fills us with nothing but foreboding and dismay." This opinion notwithstanding, it is a fact that by this time the Earl was coming to be generally regarded as the natural successor of Mr Gladstone in the leadership of the Liberal party, although he was only forty years of age.

The ill-health of his daughter Lady Peggy was a source of much concern to Lord Rosebery this year, her Ladyship having had inflammation of the lungs in the spring; and the Countess, who always insisted on personally attending any member of her family during illness, severely taxed her own health in her solicitude for her daughter. His Lordship had also removed in the spring of the year from Lansdowne House to the splendid home at No. 38 Berkeley Square, which he had almost entirely rebuilt, and which remains his London house. The irrepressible Blackie again supplies us with an "interior" here, as he was one of the house-warming party which celebrated the entrance into the new house in April: "The G.O.M. himself and his lady; also Lord Aberdeen and his

lady; Prof. Donaldson, Arnold Morley, the Liberal whip, and a few others. The G.O.M. looked quite well but discoursed rather too seriously about various matters, Popery and French novels, both unlovely subjects, to which unseasonable seriousness I put a pleasant end in the drawing-room by giving the 'Bonnie Hoose o' Airlie' at the express request of Mrs Gladstone and mine host."

Very tangible proof of Lord and Lady Rosebery's practical interest in the social conditions of the working classes was given this year when, in May, the Earl and Countess presented a swimming bath, at the cost of £2500, to the People's Palace, which, thanks to the energetic advocacy of Sir Walter Besant, had now come into existence in the Mile-End Road.

One of the most important of his Lordship's appearances in the autumn of this year was his visit to Leeds on 11th October, when he delivered an interesting speech largely concerned with foreign affairs and Imperial Federation. It was then that he emphasised the fact that our Foreign policy had become more of a Colonial policy, and more entwined with Colonial interests than ever before. Subsequent events have fully borne out the truth of this statement. The Earl pointed out that in former days our Foreign policy was mainly an Indian policy, being guided by considerations of what was best for our Indian Empire; and the reasons why our Colonial interests

had now come to overshadow all others he proceeded to illustrate at considerable length. He showed how it was that wherever we came into contact with any of the other great Powers of Europe it was through their Colonies and ours. "When you come to approach almost every Foreign question at this moment," he remarked, "you find the Colonial interest inseparable, and in future your Colonial policy must be the preponderating factor in your Foreign policy as well." The imperative necessity of conserving the great Colonial Empire which we have acquired, he urged on the ground of trade relationships, informing his audience that while the United States had taken from us, during the previous ten years, an average of £24,350,000 of home produce, and Canada had only bought £7,300,000 in the same period, in proportion to their populations Canada had taken nearly three times and a half per head of its inhabitants more than the United States. Australia over the same number of years had taken from the home country an average of £24,500,000, or about the same as the whole of the United States, though its population was only 3¼ millions. Our Australian Colonies had thus taken from the markets of the home country seventeen times more than the United States in proportion to their respective populations. "On that ground of commercial interest alone, the question is worthy of the consideration of our great commercial com-

munities," his Lordship said in pleading for a closer union with the Colonies. He also contended that it was not merely commercial interests which were involved, but the great issue at stake was the narrowing down of Great Britain to its European possessions. "Do not flatter yourselves that if Canada and Australia were to leave you you would retain your smaller Colonies. The West Indies would go with Canada; Australia would take in Australasia. As to the Cape, I think you might make up your minds for the secession of the Cape under circumstances such as these." And what we were to do in order to retain our Colonies in harmonious co-operation with the mother country was, his Lordship thought, "to admit the Colonies to a much larger share in our affairs than we do at the present." We should have to give them "a right to prompt the voice of England when it speaks abroad to a much greater extent than we do at present. We must be prepared for demands, sometimes unreasonable, such as spoiled children sometimes make. We must be prepared in some respects to diminish our own insular freedom of action on behalf of our giant offspring abroad, but to my mind the sacrifice is worth it."

It was also in this year that one of his greatest speeches on the House of Lords was made, when, on 19th March, he proposed: "To call attention to the

constitution of this House, and to move that a Committee be appointed to enquire thereon." A remarkable feature of this speech was the perfect knowledge of the history and traditions of the House of Lords which the Earl evinced in his long and brilliant discourse. He declared himself in principle "a Second Chamber man," and all his arguments were directed to show that in their own best interests—as he conceived them to be—the Peers should agree to some effort for the improvement of the Upper House as a legislative machine. The hereditary principle he frankly attacked. "When you are creating an hereditary Peer, you are attempting far more than is possible. You are creating a man, not merely for his fitness as a legislator, but you are laying down as a certainty a generation of which he may be the ancestor, and, outstepping all human faculty and human possibility, you usurp the position of Providence, and create legislators of the unborn."

Of course the motion was lost, ninety-seven voting against and fifty in its favour; but the reasonable line of argument taken by the speaker, and his marked respect for all the worthiest traditions of the House in which fate had willed him to play no unimportant part, secured for his case very careful attention.

The Reform of the House of Lords has always

been to Lord Rosebery's mind an urgent question, and seven years later he desired to fight a General Election on it, but, unfortunately for him, at a time when his party was again divided in the pursuit of reforms to which different groups were particularly devoted. It still remains with him a matter of first importance, and one cannot but suppose that his concern for the "mending" of the Second Chamber arises in some measure from the difficulties which he feels in his own person are imposed upon the energetic statesman who finds himself, against his will, a member of the House of Lords. In this connection an extract from a speech which he delivered at Bath in December 1899, on the occasion of his unveiling the tablets erected there to the elder and the younger Pitt, is of direct interest: "Had Pitt [the elder, afterwards Lord Chatham] remained member for Bath, and had not left the House of Commons, his power would have been equal to that wielded by his son. His administration would probably not have been any less long in proportion. He might have rendered incalculable service to this country. He might have saved the American Colonies, and restrained the growth of corruption, and, no doubt, of encroachment of the Crown. But in an evil hour for his own fame, and power, and happiness, he entered the House of Lords. From that day he was cut off from the sources of his power. His

Samson locks were cut, his wings were clipped, he was away from the scene of action. And what was the result of the absence of Pitt from the House of Commons? Why, twenty-five years after you first elected him member for Bath—twenty years after the period when I have stated that England reached her highest point—it was appointed for England to reach her lowest point also—to see her arms driven from pillar to post, and a great portion of the United States severed from her for ever, to see herself sometimes humiliated, and to see herself compelled to sign a disgraceful peace at a time when she was overwhelmed with debt, and when the best statesman of the time inclined to the belief that her sun had set for ever! Am I not justified in wishing that Mr Pitt had always remained member for Bath?"

In 1889 Lord Rosebery was indeed a happy man, and might well have been singled out as one of fortune's favourites. Extremely popular in Society, admired in the political world, and admitted on every hand to be one from whom his country and the Empire expected great things; fortunate in his home circle with the companionship of one whose name will ever be mentioned with reverence, his Lordship in 1889 had also the happiness of experiencing that pleasurable excitement of a contested election which he had often bewailed no hereditary legislator could enjoy. The Local Government Act

had been passed in the previous year, bringing the London County Council into existence. Seeing here a splendid field of administrative work worthy of his cultivation, the Earl came forward as a candidate in conjunction with Sir John Lubbock. Both of them were elected, and the latter is now a colleague of the Earl's in the House of Lords as Lord Avebury. Lord Rosebery was also elected Chairman of the Council, and it is not too much to attribute the dignified position to which the new body speedily attained to his Lordship's influence as "Mr Chairman." But, alas, just when Lord Rosebery was rejoicing in the great amount of useful work he was being privileged to accomplish, the shadow of death was to fall on his home.

In October of 1890 Lady Rosebery was seized with typhoid fever; in the following month she was dead. The Countess had not been long permitted to preside over the splendid home which her husband had made at No. 38 Berkeley Square. With her sudden and lamented death numerous charitable organisations connected with her own religious denomination, and many which were identified with no sectarian body whatever, had to mourn the loss of a generous and warm-hearted patron. The Countess was buried at Dalmeny, and her age, as recorded on the coffin plate, showed that, like so many of the Rothschilds, she had been denied by

Providence the gift of long life. Born on the 27th July 1837, she was only in her fifty-fourth year at her death on the 19th November 1890.

Plunged at one fell blow from a life of exceptional activity to the depths of mourning, Lord Rosebery retired for a time from all public engagements, and was only seen by his more intimate friends. His work on the London County Council, which he had found so congenial, was discontinued, and the Christmas of that year he spent with his four motherless children at Mentmore. The eldest of his family at this time was only eleven, and the youngest eight; the health of both of the girls, Lady Sybil and Lady Peggy, was known to be delicate, and the Earl himself was also broken physically, suffering much from sleeplessness. Towards the end of January 1891 he went abroad for some weeks, and a short tour in Spain was undertaken after Easter, but his concern now was not, we may be sure, the state of Foreign politics so much as surcease from his sorrow and the restoration of his children and himself to health. In the summer he engaged himself closely on his "Life" of Pitt, which appeared in November. During the autumn we find him still avoiding the scenes of his sorrow, travelling in Austria, a holiday which was brought to a sudden end by the death of his stepfather, the Duke of Cleveland. The winter he passed at

Mentmore in comparative seclusion with the members of his own family.

Happily the spring of 1892 was to see his Lordship restored to his usual robust health, and once again interesting himself in the active work of Imperial and Metropolitan politics. The triennial election for the London County Council took place in March, and on his return from Naples, where he had gone after the New Year, his Lordship found himself so importuned by those who had appreciated his former services on the Council to take up the work again, that he was induced to become a candidate for a second time, and was elected for East Finsbury, his colleague being Mr J. Williams Benn. His Lordship was further prevailed upon to occupy the chair of the Council, which he undertook to do "for a few months," as he did not wish to tie himself over the approaching General Election.

To hark back to the year of his bereavement, we have to note that during 1890 the Home Rule question had been further complicated by the Parnell-O'Shea scandal, and the mischief caused thereby in the ranks of the Irish. The hand of death was soon to remove the strange personality who counts for so much in modern Irish history, but the chief leaders were staunch to their Home Rule faith, and at the historical meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Newcastle in 1891,

the famous "Newcastle Programme" was promulgated. Here we find Home Rule still to the front, and associated with it the Liberal Party pledged themselves to Temperance reform, disestablishment in Wales, and reform of the House of Lords, with which, as we have seen, Lord Rosebery had personally identified himself.

In the spring of 1892 the Earl received the Garter rendered vacant by the death of the Duke of Sutherland. The great event of this year was Mr Gladstone's final Midlothian Campaign at the General Election. The spectacle of the aged statesman, then in his eighty-third year, entering personally into the toils and worries of a great electoral struggle was one which moved the admiration and sympathy of the whole country, despite the fact that the chief reform for which Mr Gladstone now took his stand was one that did not secure such wide approval as had been forthcoming on previous occasions when he had appealed to the country on great legislative issues. Perhaps, indeed, the fact that he now stood forth the commander of diminished battalions, the leader of a broken party, combined with his extreme age and his determination to uphold to the last the principles for which he had staked his reputation, won the sympathy even of those who differed violently from him in his legislative proposals. We may be sure that now,

when Mr Gladstone needed more than ever that generous hospitality which on previous political campaigns in Midlothian he had found at Dalmeny, it was a source of deep sorrow to Lord Rosebery that the gentle Countess was no longer there to co-operate with him in entertaining and caring for the famous statesman during this the last of all his political battles. His Lordship exerted himself by every means in his power to assist Mr Gladstone during the campaign, though he was again experiencing somewhat indifferent health from a return of that sleeplessness which had such a marked effect on his constitution in 1891.

Mr Gladstone's election by a greatly reduced majority must have been as disappointing to his host as we know it was to himself, and Mr H. W. Lucy, then of the *Daily News*, has told us that when it was announced to the Liberal leader at Dalmeny that the total majority for his party as a result of the election would be only forty, "'Too small, too small,' said Mr Gladstone, slowly shaking his head and speaking in those deep tragic tones he reserved for those occasions of greatest storm and stress."

Lord Salisbury's Government did not immediately resign after the election, but on 11th August the Ministry was defeated on an amendment moved by Mr Asquith, and Mr Gladstone forthwith formed his

last Cabinet. Immediately after the election Lord Rosebery had set out on a yachting tour, accompanied by his two sons, but on the resignation of Lord Salisbury he was recalled by Mr Gladstone and urged to resume his old duties at the Foreign Office. It is said, however, that for a time he protested that the state of his health rendered him unequal to the strain of the work, and it was only because the Premier felt that his Cabinet would be seriously weakened if Lord Rosebery did not accept a seat, that his Lordship finally yielded to Mr Gladstone's pressure, and his name was once more included in the list of Ministers, to the universal satisfaction of the country.

It is scarcely necessary to touch, and certainly in no detail, on the work of the Earl during this second period as Foreign Minister. Suffice it to say that by general consent he enhanced his previous reputation for firmness in dealing with such questions of international diplomacy as called for his attention. The most important affairs with which he had to deal were the retention of Uganda, which he insisted upon, although a section of his party did not favour this course; and the settlement of the Siamese question with France. "The best Foreign Secretary we have had for many years" was a frequently expressed opinion not confined to members of his own party.

A story told by Sir Edward Russell, of the *Liver-*

pool Daily Post, may be given as illustrating the manner in which Lord Rosebery handled the affairs of the Foreign Office. Sir Edward speaks at second hand, the story having been conveyed to him by a high permanent official, who "drew a vivid picture of what went on, how Bismarck's poor devil of an ambassador came down, wretched and flustered, and said the Chancellor was in a great rage, and going to recall him, and implored him to yield everything Bismarck wanted in a single afternoon. How most of our Foreign secretaries conceded points, or seemed to, because of the great importance of being all right with Germany. How Lord Rosebery, on the contrary, would say with perfect temper, but bland firmness, 'You know it is no good; Parliament would not have it. If you go further, my Government would not have it. And, if it comes to that, I would not have it. But we can understand that and be friends.'"

The session of 1893, during which Mr Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill was passed by the Commons and sent to meet its fate in the Second Chamber, may be described as one of the most noteworthy in the Parliaments of the nineteenth century.

Lord Rosebery, in one of his ablest speeches, supported the Bill on its second reading in the House of Lords, and the admirable temper he displayed on this very trying occasion was warmly approved by political friends and foes. He urged the House to

regard the proposals contained in the Bill as a question of policy and not merely as a Bill, in the hope that by doing so they might do something towards raising the debate and themselves; his argument being, in brief, that to discuss a Bill which, by a crushing majority, they had already decided to reject, was little better than a farce. "We might do something better than chew the dry bones of the Bill, or what is left of them, by the keen but unwearied teeth of the House of Commons," said he, "and we might at least desist from the petty and pitiful personal recrimination which has been indulged in. . . . The truth is very simple; and if we were to open our eyes to that truth, we should greatly facilitate discussion. We are two political parties disagreeing as to the best practical method of governing and conciliating Ireland. That is a very great question in itself. No much greater question could occupy us. It is a question which has puzzled the wisest minds of ages past; and I do not believe that we, in attempting to arrive at an honest conclusion on this subject, will much further our purpose by blackening the political morality of a political party." He frankly confessed that the Bill was experimental, as all Irish legislation must necessarily be, but he upheld it as "at least a large and a generous experiment." The Bill was defeated in the Lords by an overwhelming majority, after a discussion of four days.

Instead of his official duties proving, as he had feared, too severe a strain upon him, the reverse would seem to have been the case. For we find Mr Lucy, when he described his Lordship's appearance at the dinner to Sir Robert Duff in the spring of 1893, referring to his obvious physical improvement: "He seems to have recovered all his old alertness and vigour, sapped for a while by that curious inability to sleep that beset him in the autumn." The Earl is truly a glutton for work, and appears to thrive on it.

The coal strike of this year presented Lord Rosebery with an admirable opportunity to use his gifts of diplomacy for bringing about the conclusion of an industrial dispute at home that had assumed very serious dimensions, and was in truth almost as important as many a foreign crisis. His settlement of this trade difficulty brought him a further access of popularity, and when he presided over the inaugural meeting of the London Reform Union on 15th December, the display of enthusiasm which his appearance evoked exceeded everything which the Earl had ever experienced.

Early in 1894 rumours as to the impending retirement of Mr Gladstone began to circulate, and although these were for a time strenuously denied, his resignation eventually took place on the 1st March, and the next day Lord Rosebery was Premier of England.

CHAPTER VII.

"CITIZEN ROSEBERY."

AT the great meeting of the London Reform Union, to which reference has just been made, Mr Haldane sent the vast audience into raptures of delight by referring to the noble chairman as "Citizen Rosebery," and his Lordship himself has told us, when speaking of his association with the London County Council, that "Mr Chairman" was a name which would always have a charm for him, awakening as it did some of the happiest memories of his life. It is quite true that his labours as a citizen of no mean city, rendered so willingly and with such excellent results, and distinguishing him among the Peers of his time, may be set down among the greatest services to his fellow-men he has been privileged to perform.

It may be well, in touching upon this subject, to revert to his Lordship's notable address to the Aberdeen students, delivered in November 1880, when he set before them his ideal of the greatest good they could hope to perform in their generation.

"Day by day," he said, "the horizon of human possibility, which now lies so unbounded before you, must contract; the time must come when, under the stroke of illness or the decay of nature, hope and health, the pride and power of life and intellect, which now seem so inseparable from your triumphant youth, will have passed away. There will then be no surer consolation, humanly speaking, than the consciousness of honest hope fulfilled, of health not abused, of life and intellect exerted in all its strength and fulness, not like water poured upon the sand, but for the raising and bettering in some degree of some portion of your fellow-men." In this fine passage we have the keynote of his work in the London County Council, to which, as before chronicled, he was elected on its formation in January 1889.

He himself has told us frankly the reason why he determined to associate himself with the work of this new administrative body. "I entered the County Council," he wrote to the Press in February of 1892, "with a very simple motive, which no longer exists. I saw a vast experiment with numerous possibilities and enormous risks, being, as I thought, somewhat heedlessly launched. It seemed to me, rightly or wrongly, that the public were not aware of its magnitude, that the men of thought, leisure and business capacity—with whom London abounds to an extent disproportionate even to its

vast population—should come forward to give their best energies to so noble a work and make it a success. I felt, however, that I could not expect others to do what I shrank from doing myself, and so, very reluctantly, and with a strong sense of unfitness, I became a candidate."

To one who has seen much of the deplorable waste of energy which our legislative system entails, the change from speculative measure-making to actual administration must have been very agreeable, and his Lordship evidently found it so, if we may judge from this passage in a speech at Whitechapel in October 1892: "While your orators are banging tables and calling each other every kind of name, the municipal authorities go on providing gas and water, and pavements for their streets, free public libraries, and public baths and wash-houses, and do not care one farthing about those conflicts that are going on."

Politics, at best, is a windy game, and though more picturesque and exciting than the humble work of local administration, it often lacks that solid satisfaction which follows "something attempted, something done."

This election to the Chairmanship of the Council was productive of an interesting incident which gives us a clue to the inner character of the Earl, and indicates how sincere he is in all his references

to the class distinctions which he has avowedly set himself, from his earliest days, to break down. It is stated that at a committee meeting which had been summoned to consider the Standing Orders, Mr John Burns moved a resolution proposing that members of the Council, in referring to each other, should drop any personal titles they might possess as in the House of Commons, and that the occupant of the chair should be known as plain "Mr Chairman." Mr Burns had scarcely finished before Lord Rosebery was on his feet pointing out eagerly that it would surely be unnecessary for such a motion to be seconded.

Early in his life, and also arising out of his active interest in social work, this question of title had cropped up in a somewhat similar way and with equally happy result. At the annual meeting in 1875 of the Artisan Institute, a movement which had been piloted by that earnest social reformer the Rev. Henry Solly, who was probably the first philanthropic worker that brought Lord Rosebery into touch with the artisan classes, the Earl presided, and a working-man speaker of Republican opinions chose to be, as he thought, rude to his Lordship by referring to him as "Mr" Rosebery. For this he was very neatly rebuked by Mr Solly, who gives us the following delightful little story of the sequel: "When the meeting was over, and Lord Rosebery

was going, I said we were greatly obliged to him for presiding, and I was sorry this man had behaved rudely. 'Oh,' said Lord Rosebery, 'if these men only knew how little we care for our titles, they wouldn't make such a fuss about them,' and seeing Elliott (the man in question), with others, standing by the coffee bar as he went out, he held out his hand, saying, 'Come, Mr Elliott, let us shake hands; I'm not such a bad fellow after all.' When I saw Lord Lyttleton (who had gone away just previous to this finale) a few days afterwards, and told him of it, he replied, 'Oh, I'm not in the least surprised at Lord Rosebery shaking hands with Elliott. I only wonder at Elliott's shaking hands with him!'"

It is no exaggeration to say that the entire County Council became devoted admirers of their gifted and distinguished chairman, and his personal graces of character had much to do in enabling him to expend his energies on behalf of the Council to the best possible advantage. During those years he seemed to pervade the life of the metropolis. Here to-day opening a public library with a graceful little speech, urging his hearers to develop some enthusiasm for the fortunes of the great city in which they lived; there to-morrow inspecting a fire brigade display, counselling the men on their duties to the community they served; interesting himself wherever the need arose in all the minor

questions which affected the varied and prolific life of the greatest city the world has seen, and this, remember, at a time when he was also a frequent speaker on political platforms in many parts of the country. No better testimony to a Councillor's interest in his work can be adduced than the record of his attendance at Council and committee meetings, for the picturesque elements which draw members of Parliament to the debates of the House are not present here, and nothing but a stern sense of duty or a love for the work impels attendance. During the first twelve months of his connection with the Council the Earl presided at no less than forty-four public sittings of that body and attended the large number of 280 committee meetings.

It is scarcely conceivable that under these circumstances the most vigilant of adverse critics could have found it possible to reflect upon his Lordship's conduct; but one newspaper actually did not hesitate, when the Earl found it necessary to be absent from London for twenty-four hours in fulfilling a political engagement in Edinburgh, made before his election to the Council, to accuse him of "deliberate abandonment of his duty." Such an exaggerated statement is a fair sample of most of the criticism, singularly slight though that has been, which the Earl has had to encounter from those who would, out

of sheer malice at his immense popularity, delight in undermining his reputation.

The unhappy cause of his resignation from the Council has already been explained, and his re-entry also recorded. It is desirable, however, to incorporate here a personal impression of Lord Rosebery from the pen of Mr H. W. Massingham, then Editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, in which he refers to the Earl's appearance at a great meeting in St James' Hall on the eve of the second County Council election: "Lord Rosebery's reception was the event of the evening. Truth to say, he did not look well. There was the pathetic hint of sleeplessness in his eyes. The once sprightly, close-set figure drooped a little. The hair had more than a touch of grey. The voice in the opening sentences was low and broken, the whole face that of a tired man. But the enthusiasm of the meeting must have convinced Lord Rosebery, if he wanted convincing, that he had work to do which lay ready to his hand."

With all his former energy, however, he threw himself into the work of the County Council once more, and was most persistent in his public appearances, during his second period of association with the Council, to impress upon the citizens of London the need which he conceived for a local patriotism throughout the metropolis. "A Yorkshire man," he said on one occasion, "was proud of

being a Yorkshire man, the Birmingham man of being a Birmingham man, the Manchester man of being a Manchester man; but you never heard of a Londoner who was proud of being a Londoner until now." For the achievements of the County Council, as he rightly pointed out, were giving Londoners some reason to take a pride in their city, and to develop this spirit of local patriotism which adds a zest to life, and is not merely contributory to, but the very foundation of that greater patriotism of which the Earl has ever been a powerful advocate.

His second period of those delightful days of citizen service only came to an end when the course of events had called him to the highest office in the State. Even in the hour when he may be said to have scaled the summit of his ambition, his love for the work of the County Council remained as strong as ever, and on the Tuesday following his appointment as Prime Minister he found time to visit the Council Chamber and take his place among the members, who were delighted to think that their old colleague should thus have honoured them. Mr John Burns is credited with a story which comes *à propos* here. "One of the roads at Battersea was being macadamised," he relates. "I happened to go past and the men were putting their backs into it thoroughly. One of them said to me, 'Good-morning, John.' 'Good-morning,' I said;

then he turned to me with a smile and observed, 'I suppose that Rosebery is about the best thing we can do';" referring, of course, to his having become Premier of England.

And so it happened that "Citizen Rosebery" and Prime Minister of England represented honours that sat well on the same head.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRIME MINISTER—AND AFTER.

WE cannot do better, now that we see Lord Rosebery risen to the highest office of the State, than turn to the *Daily News* for a paragraph describing the feeling with which the appointment was regarded at the time: "In the two and thirty years of public life, Lord Rosebery has shown both the capacity for administration and the full sympathy with Liberal progress which pre-eminently fit him for the great duties to which he has now been called. This appointment will be in accordance with the general belief of the country and the general desire of the Liberal party."

The late Archbishop Benson, on the other hand, was one of those who thought that the Earl was taking a false step, and he set down in his diary, "R. would be ill advised to take the Premiership"; following this up fifteen months later when Lord Rosebery's Government had resigned, with the reflection, "If Rosebery had refused the Premiership on Mr

Gladstone's retirement, he would have been a greater power by this time." In these views the late Archbishop expressed opinions to which a good many would have readily subscribed, but it is probable that most of those would have been found outside the ranks of Lord Rosebery's own party. Whether or not the Earl made a mistake in accepting the Premiership cannot be known for a certainty until his career as a statesman is closed for ever. For, in a life such as his, the influence of important events is projected so far across the years to come that it is quite useless to say what would have happened had he done so and so, or what will not happen because he has done this or that. Thus much is certain, that Lord Rosebery, in agreeing to take up the office which, under the weight of years, Mr Gladstone had laid down, consulted not his own inclinations so much as the desires of Mr Gladstone and what were represented to him as the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the Gladstonian party. Himself, he is credited with having said that Sir William Harcourt was the natural successor of Mr Gladstone, and there are not wanting those who assure us that Sir William thought so too. But of this we may be confident, having regard to the shrewd political sense of Lord Rosebery and his intimate knowledge, not merely of the inner workings of his party, but of the opinions obtaining among the

rank and file, that he entered upon the Premiership fully aware of the Herculean task he was assuming; a task which, had the Liberal party been united as one man, would still have been a heavy one with a majority of only forty in the House of Commons. But with the party degenerated into a series of political groups, all holding much in common, yet too loosely joined together to exercise their full power,—to undertake the leadership of such a party was indeed sufficient to give the most ambitious would-be leader pause. Moreover, Lord Rosebery has never in the slightest degree shown himself ambitious for mere ambition's sake, but if he had it would then have been surprising had he assumed the leadership in the face of such tremendous difficulties. The fact that he did yield to Mr Gladstone's desires was but a further illustration of his whole-hearted sympathy with Liberalism and a worthy determination to carry down to another generation something of the traditions of the great leader for whom his veneration almost amounted to worship. In the light of later events it may be thought fair criticism by some to say that at the early age of 46 the Earl took upon himself a task somewhat beyond his strength to successfully carry through. That is to say, not the task of filling the office of Premier, for which he was by common consent eminently fitted, but the greater one of remodelling the Liberal

party. Probably that independent spirit of his, which we have had occasion to notice before, again stood in his way; and had he been more of a politician and less of a high-minded statesman, wishful to soar above the smaller concerns of party strife, he might have succeeded where he is thought to have failed.

The Earl's statement of his position to the meeting of his party lieutenants, held at the Foreign Office a few days after he became Premier, was a manly, straightforward confession of faith. He was at pains to point out that despite the use which had been made of his statement in the House of Lords on the discussion of the Home Rule Bill the previous year, to the effect that Home Rule could not be granted to Ireland until the predominant partner in the Union had been converted, he remained as firm as ever in his faith in Home Rule. Looking at the subject in a purely non-party spirit it is difficult to see wherein even the most ardent Home Ruler could find fault with such a statement, since it stands to reason that before a Home Rule Bill can be passed England must be converted to that policy. The proposition is so self-evident that it might be accepted by Unionist and Home Ruler alike, without affecting the position of either. But it is only further proof of the readiness which a certain class of his Lordship's critics have consistently shown to attack him with any weapons, that a phrase, innocent of itself, and used by him

in all good faith, should have been widely quoted as a political reproach.

In this same speech the young Premier frankly acknowledged the feeling which existed among some of the extreme Radicals against a Peer being leader of the Liberal party, and went on to say: "It was therefore against my will that I left the Foreign Office—the office in which we are assembled, and which I loved with an intense devotion—to come to the post where I might not be unanimously acceptable, but where I felt that the call of honour was so clear that it could not be mistaken. I sympathise with those who view it otherwise; I hope they will forgive me if I cannot share their opinion. I would only ask you to judge me, not by my words but by my acts. When you are tired of me, I shall be only too ready to relinquish a service which, though honourable, is arduous; but while I am where I am you may be sure of this, that no Liberal in your ranks will endeavour more steadfastly to do his duty to the Liberal party."

The first session of Lord Rosebery's Parliament opened very ominously for the Government, which, on the second night, was placed in a minority of two, in a critical division, thanks to the action of Mr Labouchere and his friends, who objected on principle to a Peer-Premier, and to the Irish members, in whose minds the "predominant partner" phrase was

rankling. But the Government decided, and were advised by their supporters in the Press, to take no notice of the check, though it is clear that his Lordship felt very keenly the misinterpretation of his attitude towards Home Rule. In a conversation with Mr H. W. Lucy, which that journalist has reported, he said: "Let Ireland remain quiet; let the Irish members of the present House of Commons work loyally with the English Liberals in bringing up the arrears of legislation demanded by the English electorate, and the conversion of England to Home Rule, which has already advanced by leaps and bounds, will go on to the end, obliterating the remainder of the overwhelming anti-Irish vote which in 1886 hurled Mr Gladstone from power, and swamped the Liberal party. If, on the contrary, the Irish members, not being able to get their own way in exactly their own time, play into the hands of the Conservatives and turn out the Liberal party, who have sacrificed everything for their cause, and if agrarian outrage becomes again rampant in Ireland —well, there is an end of Home Rule for the present generation."

His first speech in the House of Lords as Premier was made, of course, in the debate on the Address, and contained a very happy allusion to the great statesman whose Parliamentary career had just closed. After carefully reviewing our existing foreign relation-

ships, and touching upon the domestic legislation to which his Government stood pledged—that is to say, the "Newcastle programme," for he had told his Liberal colleagues at the meeting in the Foreign Office, "We stand where we are"—he again emphasised his attachment to the cause of Home Rule, which he based "on the highest Imperial ground . . . because I believe that the maintenance of this Empire depends not upon centralisation, but on decentralisation."

Once more the sinister shadow of the Turf falls across our page in this story of Lord Rosebery. It has been told that in 1885 he sold his racehorses and retired from this form of sport, but some eight years later he had again resumed his hobby. In 1896 he had the pleasure and misfortune to achieve his youthful ambition by winning the Derby, with a horse named "Ladas," and in 1897 he also carried off this sporting honour with "Sir Visto"; a number of other important races having meanwhile fallen to horses carrying his colours.

The winning of the Derby, while it may be said to have enhanced his popularity in certain quarters, immediately brought him very unpleasant attentions from the Anti-Gambling League and the Nonconformists generally, who may fairly be described as the backbone of the Liberal party. His Lordship, under the lash of this criticism perhaps, was tempted to various utterances in defence of his association

with the Turf, none of which can be described as worthy of his powers of argument, for they generally ended, though often humorously phrased, in a mere shirking of the question at issue; that question being not the fact that his Lordship's own connection with the Turf was above all suspicion of lucre, but that by patronising the Turf he was lending the weight of his name to an institution which, however historical and innocent in itself, had become the pivot of one of the most degrading and demoralising influences with which social reformers of the time had to contend.

No one can be blind to the fact that Lord Rosebery's patronage of the Turf and the indignation which it aroused in what has sneeringly been described as the Nonconformist Conscience, became an important factor in the conditions which were soon to force him to retire from office, and as the occasion is one for plain speaking and no mincing of words, it should be pointed out that those who attempt to apologise for the Earl in this connection are really his most dangerous enemies. There has grown up against Lord Rosebery a formidable volume of Nonconformist opinion, which assuredly will neither accept him nor any other Liberal statesman as leader of their party if he continues to patronise the Turf. It would therefore seem that the situation for him to face is this: "Shall I continue to prejudice my political position and circumscribe that great power

for good which could be mine but for this connection with the Turf, or shall I, in the interests of the party to which I have devoted the best years of my life, sink my personal inclinations, my independence of action, and stand forth unfettered in the service of all?"

To one who looks at the position in a perfectly non-partisan way, and is concerned only with the question as it affects the fortunes of the man, this seems to be the situation, and the path to be pursued is "plain as way to parish church." It is to be hoped that the sale of a number of the Earl's race-horses last year, coupled with the rumour that he intended to retire definitely from the Turf, may be followed by his finally cutting himself adrift from this unfortunate connection.

To return to the work of the Rosebery Parliament, it should be noted that the Eastern Question was again assuming a critical aspect from the bloody events in Armenia, and as the Irish members were beginning to clamour for another dissolution in order that Home Rule should once more be submitted to the country—a fact which induced Mr John Morley to ask why they should be anxious to eject a Home Rule Government from office—it was becoming evident that a General Election could not be indefinitely delayed. The majorities received by the Ministry on critical divisions in the House were gradually lessening, until in June 1895, on a com-

paratively unimportant matter of supply connected with the reserve of small arms ammunition, Mr Brodrick moved for the reduction of the salary of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, the Secretary for War, and a majority of seven against the Government was secured in a House representing considerably less than half the membership. Although, in the opinion of many Parliamentarians, little more than a snatch victory, Lord Rosebery considered that the vote was fatal, and this opinion he is understood to have shared with the Secretary for War, whatever the other members of the Cabinet may have thought. His Lordship had been suffering from ill-health again, and this, together with the unsatisfactory state of the party he had been called to lead, had probably much to do with his decision; for we cannot suppose, after his very emphatic declaration that never again would he allow his position in the House of Lords to come between him and any office he held, that the Liberal opposition to a Peer-Premier affected him on this momentous occasion.

The Liberal prospects for the General Election were most discouraging. There was no clear plan of campaign to which the party stood pledged. Some were for fighting the election on Welsh Disestablishment, others for hoisting the Home Rule standard again. Some marched independently under the banner of Temperance, and the leader himself

urged upon the party to make reform of the House of Lords the test question. He had advocated this with great zeal and persistency in his speeches prior to the dissolution, but, as we all know, his advice was not followed.

More than any Liberal of his time he has realised in his own person what he conceives to be the urgent need of reform in the constitution and procedure of the Second Chamber. In his "Life" of Pitt he enlarges on the difficulties which beset a Prime Minister, and more especially a Liberal Prime Minister who has to address his followers from the platform of the Lords; and in his speech at the great banquet given to him by the Scottish Liberals in Edinburgh in 1885, speaking generally of his condition in the Upper House, he said: "I have always thought, since I took any interest in public affairs, that a man who had been in the House of Commons and had then entered the House of Lords, and continued his interest in public affairs, was like a man with a wooden leg trying to walk with other men, and I still more strongly think that the man in the House of Lords who takes an interest in public affairs, and has never been in the House of Commons, is like a man with two wooden legs." It may be because the majority of the Liberal Party have neither one nor two wooden legs, and, therefore, do not fully appreciate the difficulties entailed by that

condition, that Lord Rosebery's desire to set the reform of the House of Lords in the forefront of their programme did not meet with their ready acquiescence.

It may even be urged by some that his failures at this, the most critical juncture in his political fortunes, to impress his views upon the party he was leading indicated that he lacked the qualities which are essential in a mighty leader of men. At any rate the facts are plain: the Liberal party at the polls suffered a severe defeat, and Lord Salisbury was returned to power with a majority which assured to him a long tenure of office.

It looked as if the defeat of his party had in nowise damped Lord Rosebery's ardour, and that he would prove himself a valiant leader in opposition, as his speech at the opening of the new Parliament was marked by all his customary brightness and buoyancy. Probably his Lordship had hopes that even yet he would be able to reorganise his forces after their Balaclava, and foresaw a time, not far distant, when victory would perch once more upon their standards. The country was being stirred to the core by the atrocious events then happening in Armenia, and it seemed for a time as if Lord Rosebery was to lead a strong public movement for European intervention on behalf of the distressed Armenians. In the most vigorous way he had protested at the

opening of Parliament against the do-nothing policy of the European Powers. "I cannot believe," he said, "and there are millions of my fellow-countrymen who cannot believe that all has been done that might have been done. We do not live in an age of crusades. The inspiration, and perhaps the faith, which impelled embattled Christendom to rescue the Cross from the dominion of the Crescent, are not present in these days; but between that chivalrous exaltation and the position of apathy, and, I would add, of degradation, in which we now find ourselves in reference to the Christian populations of the Sultan, there is a wide abyss."

But the march of events was soon to bring the Earl into collision with an important section of his followers on this very subject. Although, at an Eighty Club banquet in the beginning of March, he had spoken with great warmth and show of feeling against the abominations of the Turk, and pointed out what his own Government had striven to do for the Armenians and were in hope of accomplishing at the time of the dissolution, the movement for intervention grew to a point at which the Earl could not give it his support for reasons which he frankly explained. The rumours which had now begun to circulate about his intending retirement from the leadership of his party were confirmed on the 8th October 1896, when his resignation was announced in a letter to the late Mr Ellis, then Liberal Whip.

The day following, the Earl at a historic gathering in the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh, furnished forth the reasons for his decision. Mr Gladstone was one of those who thought that isolated intervention by Great Britain would not mean a European War, and that wonderful scene at Liverpool, when the famous statesman emerged once more from his retirement to raise his voice on behalf of an oppressed nationality, greatly complicated the situation, so far as Lord Rosebery's position as leader was concerned. No one can doubt his Lordship's sympathy with the Armenians, but, rightly or wrongly, he had come to the conclusion, from information at his disposal, that isolated action would mean a European War, and the horrors of such a contingency were vividly pictured by him in a splendid passage in his Edinburgh speech: "Some of you belong to a generation which has grown up unconscious of the horrors of war, but in this city, you, at any rate, remember that old legend of the ghastly phantom that appeared over the Market Cross before the Battle of Flodden, that summoned in awful tones King, Lords, Knights and Commons to appear within forty days at the judgment-seat in another world. Flodden was bad for Scotland; a European War in which we were engaged would transcend twenty Floddens; and that angel of death who appeared, or was said to appear, in Edinburgh, before Flodden, would appear in every hamlet, every

village, every town in our kingdom, to summon your sons, your brothers, the flower of your youth and manhood, to lose their lives in this European conflagration. I do not say that I am unwilling to draw the sword in a just and necessary cause. I have myself, while a Minister, incurred the risk of war. I do not believe that any British Minister, with reference to the vast interests committed to his charge, can avoid the risk of war; but I say that any British Minister who engages in a European War, except under the pressure of the direst necessity, except under interests directly and instinctively British, is a criminal to his country and to his position."

Among the many expedients suggested at the time, whereby England might qualify herself for independent action in the crisis, was "to hand over Cyprus." On this head Lord Rosebery had an interesting observation to make: "As regards the island of Cyprus, I will say this, that if as a proof of our disinterestedness, if as a price to pay for a large-minded dealing with the Eastern Question on the part of the Powers of Europe, we were asked to give up Cyprus, I myself, with a reservation that we should not hand it over to the Sultan, and with certain other reservations, which are not material to our discussion to-night, should think the handing over of Cyprus a very cheap price to pay for the Concert of Europe

on this question." He also told his audience that a very right-thinking lady had written him a letter, in which she said: "Why, if Europe fails us, do we not go in alone? We might be shattered, but in what nobler cause could Great Britain be shattered?" He wrote back, after some deliberation, so he said, to inform the lady that he did not wish Great Britain to be shattered. To which she replied, "My Lord, your answer has saddened me."

It will scarcely be denied that if the Earl had cared on this occasion to voice the opinion which obtained so largely in the country, and especially within the borders of his own political party, and from his place in the House of Lords had urged upon the Government of the day that policy of intervention which had received the emphatic support of such a man as Mr Gladstone, he would have achieved a marked increase of political popularity, in his own party at least. But it is one of the qualities which lends greatness to the man, that whenever he has been convinced that a certain course, though acceptable from the point of view of party opportunism, or even acceptable to a considerable section of the English people, as in the case under notice, would clash with the interests of the Empire, he has not hesitated to risk unpopularity and take what he has believed to be the course best calculated to promote the interests of the Empire.

In a sense it was Mr Gladstone who made him leader, and it was the same hand that unmade him. "He has equally, innocently and unconsciously administered himself the final *coup de grâce* to his successor," said Lord Rosebery, "because, however much I may differ from Mr Gladstone in opinion on this question or on that, or on any other, I never will appear in sharp conflict with him, when I am holding the position, titular or otherwise, of leader of the Liberal Party." The Earl also said on the same occasion that he had occupied that position "almost beyond the conditions of dignity and of self-respect," his resignation having been actually lying in the hand of his colleagues since the General Election, "to put in force whenever they should think fit, and whenever the party or the unity of the party should require it." It should be remarked also that in this farewell address he singled out from among his colleagues Mr Asquith, as one whose "rare combination of head and heart" would "conduct him to the highest office of the State."

The concluding lines of this historic speech are worthy of quotation here: "And now, gentlemen, I have only to say the hardest word of all—Good-bye. There is a strange fatality that I find in political meetings in Edinburgh. It seems only yesterday that I came to my last. I had then come fresh from being appointed Prime Minister. I came

to ask you in the great crisis of my fortune and my life — you, my earliest friends — to stand by me as you had stood before. I am glad that, by an accident almost, it falls on me to lay down the leadership of the Liberal Party in the very place where I took it up, in mine own ancient city, among my own neighbours, my own fellow-citizens, my own friends."

It was thus ostensibly on an Imperial issue, whatever other influences may have led him to the decision, that Lord Rosebery laid down the leadership of his party, and it requires no gift of prophecy to say that if he should ever resume that position it will be at a time when another great Imperial issue is before the country.

CHAPTER IX.

TO-DAY—AND TO-MORROW?

AFTER his resignation the Earl for some considerable time maintained a strictly private condition, speaking only at non-political meetings, where his appearances were always hailed with delight, for in all his political ups and downs he has remained a permanent favourite of Society. It was his melancholy duty in May of 1898 to act as a pall-bearer at the funeral of the remarkable man with whose later political life his own career had been so closely identified, and for whom he had conceived a feeling of deep and permanent affection. His speech in the House of Lords on Mr Gladstone's death was in every respect a beautiful oration, worthy of the occasion and their friendship.

In 1898 his public appearances became more numerous, and took on a fresh interest, for, as was inevitable, he was again being led into the discussion of important public questions and international affairs. At the Imperial Institute on 7th July, when he presided over a lecture by Professor Waldstein,

he spoke at some length on the Anglo-Saxon Alliance, and on 25th November he gave his inaugural address as President of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, in which position he had succeeded Mr Gladstone. His speech was mainly concerned with statesmen and books. And during the same autumn he also delivered his inaugural address to the Associated Societies of Edinburgh University, of which he had become Honorary President, the chair being occupied by Mr A. J. Balfour, M.P., Chancellor of the University. He spoke on Foreign Affairs and the Duties of Empire.

Unmistakable proof of his Lordship's immense popularity was given on 20th April 1899, when his daughter Lady Peggy became the wife of the Earl of Crewe, formerly Lord Houghton. The brilliant assembly which witnessed the ceremony included the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, and many of his Lordship's former colleagues. The exhibition of public interest in the wedding was so marked that the Press generally referred to it as "striking proof of the popularity of the Earl," further evidence of which was given by his election in the autumn to the Rectorship of Glasgow University.

Although protesting that he had no immediate intention of returning to the dusty arena of politics, Lord Rosebery, at the dinner of the City Liberal

Club, on 5th May, in the succeeding year, found himself again in the full flood of a characteristic political address, in which he pointed out what he believes the New Liberalism is to be. "If the old Liberal party as it was before 1886 is to be revived again, or any new party is to be founded on its severance, this factor, at any rate, must be prominent to the minds of those who construct or revive—the factor of the larger patriotism that I have called Imperialism."

If Lord Rosebery is right in this opinion, it would seem that the New Liberalism is to be a party of Liberal Imperialism, and if time should produce such a party, its leader is at hand.

True to his Imperial faith, Lord Rosebery last year, whenever he felt himself compelled to express an opinion on the war, consistently advised the country "to trust the man at the helm when you are passing through a storm." That he approved our attitude towards the Boers subsequent to Mr Kruger's ultimatum is avowed, and in a speech at Bath he made the following interesting reference to that most delicate question between the two parties of the State—Majuba Hill: "The battle of Majuba Hill was not a very considerable battle at all—it was a mere skirmish; and concurrently with that there was an attempt on the part of the then Government to settle peacefully the issue of

the Transvaal. Now, whatever you may think of the result of that attempt, the thing in itself was a sublime experiment. It was an attempt to carry into international policy the principle of the Gospel itself, and had it been rewarded with success, we, I think, should have been entitled to believe that mankind had taken a great stride onward, and the hopes for the world and humanity at large would have been infinitely better than they are. It was not merely, if I may so express myself, that Mr Gladstone, I believe, wished to apply the principle of that religion, so dear to him, to international policy that made him make that attempt. Mr Gladstone, it is very little known, except to those who were most intimate with him, had an overpowering conviction of the might and power of England. He thought that Great Britain could afford to do things, owing to that overwhelming might and dominion, which other nations could not afford to do without a risk of misunderstanding; and for that reason, which I think has never been clearly enough set before the public, he endeavoured, after there was undoubtedly a reverse, to treat with the Boers as if no such reverse had taken place. Now we know how the magnanimity was rewarded. We may feel perfectly confident—we, who follow Mr Gladstone—that, were he alive, and had he the control of the destinies of this country, it would not

be possible for him, nor would it enter into his contemplation had he to make terms after this war, to make terms such as were made after the skirmish of Majuba Hill."

His Lordship also added that at the time of the settlement with the Boers he felt "deep misgiving, as he did not believe that the world was ripe for such an experiment."

It is only a further example of the Earl's comprehensive knowledge of Foreign affairs, that at a time when it was popularly believed we had entered upon "a little war" with the Dutch Republics, he took occasion to utter this warning: "Gentlemen, make no mistake, this is no little war. I will give at least three reasons why I think it is not. In the first place, in South Africa people, including that vast native population, are all watching which is to be the predominant race. I will give you another reason—because in this contest the World Empire has called to her assistance, from every corner of her dominions, detachments of her subjects to give her—not their assistance, for, thank God, we can do without that—but to show their sympathy and their resolution to be one with the mother country in the hour of trial. Lord Chatham would have rejoiced to see that within a century and a half that Empire which he had planned for us was so consolidated as to send troops to the assistance of

the mother country. And there is a third reason to which I have alluded, which removes this war from the category of little wars. It is a circumstance to which it is unpopular to allude, but to which I have alluded already this afternoon, and which it would be improper of me to omit—I mean the attitude of Europe with regard to this country. I do not say, for I do not know, that the Governments of Europe are unfriendly to this country; but I do say, from every source from which I can learn—I do say the Press is; and so far as the Press represents the opinion of these countries, the Press is almost uniformly hostile to this country. Depend upon it, there are nations on the Continent of Europe who are watching, with an eagerness which should give you cause to reflect, over every trip, every stumble, much more over every catastrophe or every disaster which may overtake your arms. Then, when that is the condition of things, I am one of those who think that the war waged under these circumstances is not a little war."

His Lordship had so far returned to an active interest in current politics as to address a letter to one of the Liberal candidates during the General Election in the autumn of 1900, which can only be regarded as a manifesto of his present position, and was so accepted by the country. In this important communication he wrote: "There are

three great national reforms which cannot wait—legislation in respect of Temperance and the housing of the working classes, not on extreme and visionary but on sound and practical lines, and fearless administrative reform, more especially of the War Office.

"With regard to this, there is nothing to hope for from the present Government. The housing of the working classes they have touched and scamped. They have appointed a Royal Commission as to Temperance, and then flouted the Commission and dismissed the subject with a sneer. Administrative reform could not safely be entrusted to those who appointed, conducted, and ignored the Hartington Commission."

The Earl's retirement from leadership, which must be looked upon as merely temporary, has enabled him to turn his attention more closely to literature. In common with Mr Gladstone he has always been distinguished by his love of books, and though his literary interests are scarcely so catholic as those of his former chief, his command of what is vaguely termed "style" is greater, more individual; his writings have a richer literary flavour. His monograph of Sir Robert Peel has appeared since he laid down the burden of leadership, and his remarkable book on "Napoleon: the Last Phase" is still prominent in the booksellers' windows, having been published so recently as the autumn of 1900.

In such a sketch as this of his Lordship's life, it is impracticable to deal with his literary work at any length, and indeed there are two fascinating phases of his career which have received scant notice in these pages—Lord Rosebery, the orator and man of letters. Neither greatly concerns Lord Rosebery, Imperialist, and since one cannot hope to do justice to these sides of the Earl's character in the space at disposal, it is better to leave them alone. An American author (Mr Norman Hapgood) has written at some length of Lord Rosebery as a "Literary Statesman," and yet has left a vast amount unsaid; as an orator, one would require a chapter or two to illustrate his Lordship's attainments in the art of Demosthenes. But this may be said of his latest book: apart altogether from the unusual aspect of Napoleon's character which it presents, and the charming manner in which it is written, it displays such evidence of minute research and profound study, that one need only point to it as convincing testimony against those superficial critics who suggest that Lord Rosebery is over-fond of the primrose path of dalliance. It is painstaking in the extreme, and represents an enormous amount of hard work, which, happily, has been crowned with complete success in the immediate popularity attained by the book. Lord Rosebery has also promised a companion volume to his "Life" of William Pitt, in

the shape of a monograph on the equally famous father of that genius, the Earl of Chatham. Let us hope he may be able to give this other hostage to Letters before he is swept once more into the whirlpool of active politics.

Lord Rosebery, then, must still be regarded as a great personal and political force; he is no extinct volcano. For the time being he may appear inactive, but his energy, undiminished we may be certain, still remains, and when the psychological moment comes it will show itself once more in an eruption—not devastating, but inevitable, imperative, essential. He is part and parcel of our national life, and cannot sever himself therefrom till his work is done.

THE END.

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